EASTERN CUSTOMS IN BIBLE LANDS

H. B. TRISTRAM D. D.

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BY

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PREFACE

ONE day, last month, I was sitting under the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land," hard by the khan immortalized through its connection with the parable of the Good Samaritan, in the brown and desolate wilderness of Judea. A few yards in front was the ancient well, to which the khan owed its existence, sunk, perhaps, before the age of Joshua, its rim deeply scored all round by the cords of the water-drawers of centuries. An Arab woman came down from the hills above, to draw water; she unfolded and opened her goat-skin bottle, and then untwined a cord, and attached it to a very small leathern bucket which she carried, by means of which she slowly filled her skin, fastened its mouth, placed it on her shoulder, and, bucket in hand, climbed the mountain. I thought of the woman of Samaria at Jacob's Well, when an Arab footman, toiling up the steep path from Jericho, heated and wearied with his journey, turned aside to the well, knelt and peered wistfully down. But he had "nothing to draw with, and the well was deep." He lapped a little moisture from the water spilt by

the woman who had preceded him, and, disappointed, passed on.

The incidents were very simple and natural, yet how full of Scriptural illustration to a stranger from the West!

In the hope that a number of not less simple illustrations, drawn from the observation and experience of many months passed during a series of years in that hallowed land, may prove interesting, or, at least, useful, to many a stay-at-home student of the word of God, the notes which compose the following chapters have been put together by the author, who will feel richly rewarded if any observations of his may be permitted to subserve to the better understanding of the descriptions and allusions of Holy Writ. To that book, the country, its features and its inhabitants, their ways and customs, are what the frame is to the picture. The accurate truthfulness of that picture is borne in upon the mind with an ever-deepening conviction the more we study the minute details of Oriental life on the spot.

COLLEGE, DURHAM,
10th April, 1894.

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I

JESUS AS TEACHER AND HEALER

I

JESUS AS TEACHER AND HEALER

"THE unchanging East." The Biblical student must often be thankful that so it is. Otherwise much which has explained or illustrated many an obscure allusion in the volume of sacred writ would have been long since lost and utterly forgotten. But that East, though still unchanged, is beginning to change. The restless West is invading it; and many an old landmark is crumbling away. Customs and fashions, stereotyped in the daily life of centuries, are becoming modified through Western influences; and now, when the shriek of the iron horse is heard, not only among the ruined churches of Asia Minor, but at the very gates of Jerusalem itself, we are warned that the monotony of Western civilisation is overspreading the lands of the past as well as those of the future. Let us photograph then every feature of Eastern life and custom ere it fades into the historic past; for there

is no time to be lost. Many eyes have looked on Palestine: the eye of the antiquarian; the eye of the geographer; the eye of the historian; the eye of the geologist; the eye of the naturalist; the eye of the theologian. And on the retina of each as he gazes is reflected a different picture. The eye of the Biblical student clothes the narratives of the past with the surroundings of the present. With such an eye as this we would gaze on that framework which once enshrined the most hallowed incidents of the world's history.

We may take as our first illustration the method of our Lord's public ministry. There was nothing in the manner of the commencement of His ministry which was not in accordance with what the men of His time and nation would look for in one who began to present himself as a great teacher. He went into the synagogue of His own city, and there, in accordance with the custom of the Jews, when the exposition of the Law and the Prophets was open to any one after the usual prayers and psalms had been recited, unfolded and developed the prophecy of Isaiah. He then went round the neighbouring villages teaching in the same fashion. Having thus attracted many followers, He selected His twelve Apostles, and, as it were, enrolled them in His service. Thus had the prophets of old

gathered their disciples. We must remember that long before the coming of Christ—indeed, from the earlier times of the settlement in Canaan—the prophetic had been separated from the priestly office. It was so in the time of the judges. The Aaronic priests might perform with more or less exactness the rites of the Law; but plainer and more directly hortatory or minatory teaching was needed to rouse the people in times of deadness or ignorance.

The prophets were therefore raised up from time to time sporadically and by no unbroken succession in time or place, but by direct inward call from God. Their authority was impressed by their teaching alone, sometimes, but not always, by the endowment of wonder-working power. Thus they were, above all else, teachers. In this capacity they gathered followers and founded schools—the schools of the prophets. These schools were rather peripatetic than stationary, and they continued under various leaders during the whole period of the monarchy. We must not imagine a Hebrew Oxford or Cambridge, but a company of young men drawn together by their devotion to their teacher, and accompanying him as he travelled from town to town in his circuit, stirring up the religious life from place to place by his teaching. These followers gathered the people together to hear him,

secured him hospitality, prepared quarters for him, and acted as his attendants. The more experienced and trusted scholars were sent into the neighbouring villages to teach and prepare for his coming. After the Captivity the continuity of these peripatetic prophetic schools was interrupted, and the formal instructions of the rabbis at fixed centres took their place. But the tradition was not forgotten in that epoch of cold formality ; and as Wesley in an age of dead formalism gathered followers and pupil-preachers everywhere through the length and breadth of England, so the new Teacher of Nazareth arrested the attention of the thousands who were all waiting for Him, for their spiritual yearnings were unsatisfied by the dry husks of a legal teaching which had lost all its spirit and life. It was in accordance with the ideas of the time and country that He should select from those who surrendered themselves to His teaching a band of assistants, in short, a new school of the prophets.

Not otherwise acts the dervish or prophetic teacher among the Mohammedans at the present day. While the Mollahs, known in India as the Moulvies—*i.e.*, the priests or regular teachers of the Koran—are trained like the rabbis and scribes of old in regular seminaries, there arises from time to time some dervish, very often a half-crazed fanatic,

proclaiming himself some great one, one of those concerning whom our Lord uttered the warning, 'Many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ ; and the time draweth near : go ye not therefore after them." Such a one is fresh in all our memories as having within the last few years been the cause of ruin and desolation in a vast tract of Africa, the Mahdi of the Soudan, who proclaimed himself the Messiah of Islam, and announced as his mission the overthrow of the Turkish Khalifat, which he declared had abandoned the purity and strictness of the Prophet's teaching, and had for generations held alliance with the infidel. A still more real, because more sincere and spiritual, Moslem Messiah arose a few years ago in Persia, calling upon the Shiah sect to reform, and also foretelling union with Christians as the result of reformation. In the organisation of his followers he endeavoured to imitate the methods of our Lord as recorded in the Gospels. Like most other Moslem reformers, after a time he incurred the vengeance of the authorities, was put to death, and his followers dispersed. Ten years ago I met the last of his apostles, an exile at Acre. But, without such high pretensions as these, we continually meet with self-constituted prophets in the East, who claim some special sanctity, and gathering a few

followers, move about with them from place to place and from tribe to tribe, generally enforcing some special and perhaps neglected precept of the Koran, and so extending their influence through a wide district. Thus we see that our Lord adopted the method of promulgating His doctrine which was suited to the habits and ideas of His country.

But it was as the Healer rather than as the Reformer that His fame was first spread abroad. Imagine, if you can, the condition of a country in which there is neither trained physician nor skilled surgeon, where the healing art is only practised by a few quacks, who rely more on charms than on physic for their cures. Such is now, and such was Palestine in our Lord's day. There were physicians (St. Luke, we know, was one), but their whole education was, as we learn from the Talmud, empirical. Doubtless there were then, as now, many kindly nurses, with a knowledge of herbs, embrocations, and simples, but whose knowledge went no further. Imagine a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, like Gaza, with one-third of its population suffering from blindness, partial or total, and not a physician of any kind in the city. Think of the thickly studded villages of Benjamin and Ephraim, and all through that country not a man with skill enough to set a fractured limb, or treat a fever or

an inflammation! Yet in the Holy Land, until medical missionaries were sent out by English societies, there was not a physician in the country, and even now there are very few. In such a country as this, with sick and crippled in every village, we can picture the eager excitement when the news spread that there has arrived a good physician, who is also a holy Man, in a neighbouring town; that He has healed by a touch a cripple who has lain for twenty years helpless on his mat; that by a word a leper's flesh has become as pure as that of a little child; that He has stretched out His hand and lifted a poor worn patient from her bed; that He has given sight to the blind beggar; that He has done all this and more, simply when asked! Who has not an ailing friend or kinsman? The whole village turns out. The invalid of years is hurried off on his pallet by his friends; the blind and the lame press on to reach the halting-place of the mighty Healer before He may proceed on His journey. So "they came to Him from every quarter, and brought to Him all that were diseased and them that were possessed with devils."

Even now in the remoter parts of the country the rumour of a European who, with a slight knowledge of pharmacy and a simple medicine-chest, pitches his tent outside a town or village,

will in a few hours bring crowds of sufferers from all the district round. This has often been my case. I well remember on one occasion pitching camp on the plain of Gennesaret, close to Mejdel (Magdala) and not far from Tiberias. The rumour spread that a Frank *hakeem* had arrived. Soon a crowd had assembled, screeching forth their woes and ailments at the very top of their inharmonious voices. Medicines at once had to be compounded for ophthalmia, ulcers, and dropsy. Of the first we had more than a score of cases, which happily required no great medical skill for their treatment, and we were well supplied with the familiar remedies. No disease should be hopeless to a Frank *hakeem*, and therefore two men came to be cured of blindness, and a third of a crippled leg, caused by a bullet shot in the knee of twenty-seven years' standing. Many sufferers from ague-fever could easily have been cured had we had time and quinine sufficient. But when a word in season was spoken, and they were told of the good Physician of souls, at once their bigotry was excited, for they were chiefly Jews from Tiberias, which is an almost exclusively Hebrew city ; and the children on the skirts of the crowd kept crying out, "This is our land, and shall be ours again ; why should Nazarenes defile it?" Nevertheless,

when evening had closed in, several of our visitors returned, and expressed their gratitude for the medicines they had received. Some few, Nicodemus-like, had no objection to receive tracts and even Gospels, provided they were in Hebrew.

No miracles are more frequently mentioned among our Lord's works of Divine power and mercy, than those in which He gave sight to the blind. The giving sight to the blind was one of the signs by which the Messiah should be recognised. To the student who knows the East, nothing can be more natural than the frequency of the cases in which the blind appealed for help to the Son of David. There is probably no country in the world, except Egypt, in which this affliction is so prevalent. Blindness is not, and never was there, the rare and occasional visitation that it is among ourselves. Owing to the nature of the climate—the fine dust and sand which floats in the air; the glare of the sunlight when there is but scanty and occasional shade; the sudden change in the plains from the heat of the day to the chill of night, causing inflammation to the eyes, especially to those who are sleeping in the open on the housetops; the swarms of flies, which are attracted to the eyelids of the diseased, and then carry the virulent and infectious discharge on

their feet to the eyelids of the healthy—all these and other causes render blindness, total or partial, so common that it is computed that one-tenth of the inhabitants of the towns and plains of Palestine are entirely or partially blind. The inhabitants of the higher or hill regions generally escape. At Gaza, where ophthalmia is more prevalent than elsewhere, about one-third of the population have lost the sight of either one or both eyes. Then, in a land where the most elementary methods of the healing art are almost unknown, it is needless to state that oculists do not exist. No native practitioner would dream of attempting any operation on the eye beyond the removal of a thorn or a grit of sand and simple fomentation. Sugar of lead and sulphate of zinc are alike unknown. Moreover, there is a firm belief, fostered by the fatalism of Mohammedanism, that diseases of the eye are incurable, save by the interposition of God; so that nothing creates greater surprise than the ease with which the Western *hakeem* can relieve ophthalmia.

That such cases were not looked upon by the Jews of old as so hopeless as by the modern Moslem may be inferred from the emphasis laid by the man healed at the pool of Siloam on the fact of his having been *born* blind. "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened

the eyes of one that was born blind." Congenital blindness is as rare in the East as in the West. All congenital infirmities were believed by the Jews, as by the Moslems, to be especial marks of God's displeasure. But the question, "Who did sin, this man or his parents?" implies more than the tendency to hereditary ailments or the enfeebled constitutions and diseased frames of the offspring of dissolute parents.

There was a widespread belief among the Jews of that period in the transmigration of souls from one body to another. It had not perhaps as yet assumed a very definite form, as it did soon after in the mystical teaching of the Essenes. It was probably originally derived from Persia. The first distinct expression of the tenet which we find is in the book of Wisdom (about B.C. 160): "Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled" (chap. viii. 20). It was one of the vain speculations which the rabbis were fond of discussing, and which would soon be taken hold of and accepted as a truth by the people.

Seeing how widespread is the affliction, no wonder that not here and there, but everywhere, in the East, the blind beggar is an institution. Sitting by the wayside, outside every town and every village, are rows of blind of all ages and both

sexes, with their black wooden bowl in front of them, piteously raising their voices in inharmonious concert, and imploring alms, whenever approaching footsteps are heard. It is needless to state that there is no systematised aid for the blind, and that these poor darkened ones must for the most part beg or starve. But the Mosaic injunction of sympathy for the blind is not forgotten by the Moslem, and the very poorest will spare of their pittance for these sitters by the wayside. Well can we understand the eagerness with which the blind man, as he heard the tramp of many feet pouring out of Jericho, would cry for alms. Among so many there would be some who would not turn a deaf ear. But when he hears that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by, at once the monotonous appeal is changed for a very different one: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." It is not for alms—now he asks for a far greater gift. He asks, recognising to the full the character and power of the Traveller, Son of David—*i.e.*, the promised Messiah, by whom "the eyes of the blind shall be opened"; and they "shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness"—have mercy on me, and give that which no human skill can give. Whether it were that the multitude looked on the request as preposterous—for no human power could help the

blind—or that his persistent cries prevented them from hearing the words they were eagerly gathering from those Divine lips, we know not; but his faith is too strong to be thus overborne, and soon he is bidden to rise and come. At once his prayer is answered, and the blind beggar becomes the attached disciple.

But the blind are not the only sitters by the wayside. Every traveller, when first he visits the East, must be pained and shocked at the display of misery, deformity, and disease that meets his eye at the entrance of every city, and especially about the gateways of all public buildings, mosques, and churches, and round the wells. He may well imagine himself landed in a country peopled by blind, cripples, and lepers. He has, however, seen the worst; for all the suffering of the place is in public. In lands where hospitals and refuges are unknown, and where there is no State aid for poverty and disease of any kind, begging is an absolute necessity, and does not imply any degradation. And this begging is regulated and systematised. The helpless and the crippled are placed in the most frequented thoroughfares. They do not change their posts which by some prescription or long usage appear to be recognised, like a London street crossing, as

the rightful possession of the occupant; and there they ejaculate their piteous appeal to each passer-by, just as leper or blind man did to Jesus of Nazareth as He passed by. The lepers are always without the walls, and at some distance apart from other mendicants, as we may see to-day at Jerusalem, where they sit some little way outside the Jaffa and Damascus gates and by the pool of Siloam. Every cripple has some friends who will carry him to his accustomed seat in the morning, and, when they return from work at sunset, will carry him back to his hovel, while the lepers crawl back to their sheds, usually attached to the outside of the city wall.

The duty of almsgiving is recognised and largely practised by all religions in the East; in the case of the rich by regular daily doles, such as the Pharisees used to distribute when they sounded a trumpet before them, ostensibly to summon the recipients. Most wealthy Moslems, on their daily visit to the mosque, dispense a very small coin to each beggar as they pass; or in the case of very great men are followed by a servant, who places a para, or quarter-farthing, in the bowl held out by each sufferer. Fortunate indeed among his compeers was the lame man who could, in the days of the glory of Herod's temple, secure a

platform, like the lame man healed by St. Peter, close to one of its principal gates.

Frequently, too, like Lazarus laid at the gate of Dives, the sufferers take their station at the threshold of the courtyards of the wealthy. At the gate of a rich Moslem sheikh, who had a great reputation for piety, in the ancient city of Nizib in Mesopotamia, I saw a crowd of wretched-looking beggars, carried thither every morning by their friends to receive the dole which their patron always silently distributed among them on his daily progress to the bazaar. One could picture him, like a Pharisee of old, distributing his alms to be seen of men.

The cleansing of the leper was an evidence of Divine power no less than the giving of sight to the blind. There is no reason to believe that modern leprosy differs from that of Biblical days, except that, as in most other diseases, time has somewhat modified the virulence of its symptoms. Among the unchanged features of the changeless East, few can more impress the stranger from the West, than his first sight of lepers outside the city gates. At Damascus, the city of Naaman; at Samaria, where the lepers clustered beneath the walls during the terrible siege by Benhadad; at Shechem (Nablous), not far from the scene of the

healing of the ten lepers, on the borders of Samaria and Galilee; in Jerusalem itself, just east of the Zion gate,—colonies of these poor creatures, loathsome and repulsive, still remain, transmitting to their posterity the awful scourge. All day long they sit by the roadside, with the wooden bowl before them for the reception of alms, raising a loud wail and imploring help from every passer-by, while they display their sickening sores. Some have lost fingers and toes, ears and nose, others even lips and eyes, their hands eaten off to the wrist; some as yet show but slight traces of the incurable taint. They will often approach the stranger, but they dare not touch him; for though it is well known on the spot that the disease is not contagious by slight contact, yet the idea of pollution thereby is strongly held both by Jew and Moslem. In Jerusalem every effort has been made to ameliorate their condition by the provision of a leper hospital, with medical care; but they refuse to take advantage of it, preferring the good income they secure as mendicants outside, and knowing well that, though medical skill may relieve, it can never cure, them. The curse is hereditary, as denounced to Gehazi; but years may pass before it shows itself. The children of lepers marry, and too often, going into places where they are not

known, marry into healthy families. Men often reach the age of fifty before the inherited taint breaks out, but when it does the sufferer is at once an outcast. The lepers outside Samaria to-day may be the descendants of Gehazi; and everywhere, so far as we know, they are a hereditary caste, like the *crétins* of the Pyrenean villages.

It may be merely an accidental coincidence, but it is worthy of notice, that all the places where our Lord is stated to have met with lepers are in the central districts of Samaria and Galilee. Whether we explain this by His going northwards from the city Ephraim, to which He had withdrawn, to Perea, and thence descending to Jerusalem, or by His coming southward first through Galilee and then through Samaria, is immaterial. In either case, the village where these lepers met Him was in this central region. Now it is just in this district that to this day we find the colonies of lepers most numerous. On the coast line there are few, in the southern regions none, nor have I ever met with them in the wide eastern country south of Damascus. But no towns and few large villages in the central district are without the little lazar colony sitting by the roadside. Samaria, Nablous, Tibneh, Jenin, Tubas, Talluseh, and many other places have the leper huts clinging to their walls, or beyond the circle of the village hovels.

In our Lord's time, though the isolation of lepers was maintained as at present, yet the severest restrictions had been relaxed. The Talmud gives special directions for the admission of lepers to the services of the synagogue, reminding us of the arrangements in our own mediæval churches of leper windows, by which the Host could be seen, some of which, as at York, still exist. Grates or bounds were to be made for the leper, ten hands high and four cubits broad. Within these he stood, but he was to be the first to enter and the last to depart, lest they should be defiled that stood in the synagogue. Even in the Temple lepers were admitted to the court of the Gentiles, *i.e.*, to the part open to the uncircumcised and to those under ceremonial uncleanness. And though the leper was not permitted to enter a city, he was not by the rabbis excluded from villages, on the quaint ground that by the law of Moses he was not to enter "the camp of Israel"; and the camp of Israel was represented after the conquest by every city that had been walled from the time of Joshua, for, said they, Joshua sanctified the walled cities with the holiness that belonged to the camp of Israel, but he did not so to the rest of the land nor to the cities that had no walls.

We know that the social isolation and jealousies

of jarring faiths have not been mollified in the East; Jew, Christian, and Moslem stand as angrily apart as did ever Jew and Samaritan two thousand years ago. But there is one exception. The old proverb says, "Adversity makes strange bedfellows"; and thus we find that as, while the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, yet a Samaritan leper was in the same band with his Jewish fellow-sufferers, so Jewish, Christian, and Moslem victims of the same fell disease herd together in the same cluster of huts outside any town or village of Central Palestine to-day.

Not less conspicuous than the faith of the blind or of the lepers was that of the woman who came to be healed of her infirmity. In order to comprehend the full grasp of her faith, we must bear in mind the very different position of woman in Eastern lands from that which she holds in Christian countries. Not that women among either Jews or Gentiles were secluded and always veiled in public, as among Mohammedans. The use of the veil covering the face dates only from the promulgation of the Koran, and is not even now practised either by Jews or Christians. The veil spoken of in the Old Testament is rather a light shawl or muffler thrown loosely over the head, and which the wearer instinctively draws half across her

face if accosted by or speaking to a stranger. Such must have been the veil of Ruth, a shawl large and strong enough to carry six measures of barley, nearly equal to six pecks. But while woman was happily free from the degrading restraints imposed by Moslems, while she could travel alone, while she could mingle freely in the crowd that followed the Preacher, there was, and is, in all modest Eastern women, an inbred shrinking from observation, an avoidance of everything in dress and manner that might attract attention, which would render it hard indeed for this poor timid sufferer to make her affliction known to the Good Physician. Working her way unobserved through the crowd, she draws her mantle or veil across her face, and, unnoticed by human eye, applies her finger to His garment with the touch of faith, and falls back among the throng.

We are told that she had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. St. Luke, himself a physician, while stating the fact that she had exhausted all her means upon physicians, but in vain, expresses the failure of his profession in gentler terms than the other Evangelists. "She had suffered many things." Rude and severe was the treatment of disease among the

Jews, as it still is among Orientals. For such cases as this in question, the remedies are often painful and loathsome, a strange mixture of charms and jugglery with childish specifics. It would be impossible to understand how intelligent men should have continued to believe in or to use such methods for generations, did we not know the mysterious connection between mind and body in the effect of remedies, and the wonderful power of faith acting on the patient in many diseases. In such cases as that of this woman, the rabbis tell us that after various medicaments had been drunk the patient was to be placed where two ways met, and then to be suddenly startled from behind. Ten different grotesque ceremonies or performances are prescribed. Among them is the following. Seven ditches are to be dug. In each of them vine cuttings are to be burned, and the patient is to sit astride over each of them successively, while the fuel is burning, till she has endured the heat and smoke from all the seven, while prayers are recited, and then a sort of incantation is pronounced over her. If such had been the treatment in this case, well might the Evangelist record that she had suffered many things, in strange contrast with her present healing and blessing, without money and without price.

II

SOME INCIDENTS IN THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS

II

SOME INCIDENTS IN THE MINISTRY OF THE LORD JESUS

THE first disciples were called from the fishing-boats of the Galilean lake. There is not an incident in the whole range of Gospel history which is more vividly illustrated by the actual manners and customs of the present day than those which relate to the fisher's craft. The Lake of Gennesaret was always famed for the immense abundance of its fish. In Jewish times the fish of the lake formed an important item in the food of the population of Galilee, and by law the fishing was free to every one without taxation. Josephus tells us that the water of the lake was of the sweetest; and that it contained great multitudes of fishes of many sorts, which were different from those found elsewhere. In this he was most correct, though the Jews were peculiarly unobservant of the specific distinctions of the fish tribe; only dividing them into those with fins and scales,

which were clean, and those without fins and scales, among which they reckoned the eel and the *silurus*, which were unclean. Out of thirty-seven species which we have procured in the Sea of Galilee, no fewer than sixteen are peculiar to the lake and its effluent, the river Jordan. Some of the others belong also to the Nile and the Euphrates; while only one is found also in the other rivers of Palestine, which flow into the Mediterranean. It is curious that all the peculiar species are very closely allied to the various fishes which inhabit the great lakes of Central Africa, from the Nyanza to the Nyassa. It is said that in the flourishing epoch of Galilee, under the Roman rule, there were four hundred vessels on the lake, where now there are scarcely a dozen.

The modern boats are all of the same type, doubtless built on the model of those used by the Apostolic fishermen of Galilee. They are broad, with a very shallow keel, are decked at the bow and stern, which are high; have an open well in the centre, where a mast can be stepped; and are capable of accommodating from a dozen to twenty men. Under the deck of the bows is a sort of open cabin, where there is room for several men to lie down, and where our Lord was asleep safe from the waves breaking over the prow during

the storm. When needful, the boats are propelled by oars ; but whenever the wind favours, the mast is raised, and the large lateen sail, similar to those in use on the Mediterranean, is hoisted. The shoals of fish in every part of the lake are marvellous, and how they find food is a mystery. On a calm day one may see masses, several hundred yards long, with the dorsal fins projecting out of the water, as closely as they can pack. At a little distance one of these shoals has the appearance of a shower of rain pattering on the glassy surface of the lake. The illusion would be complete, were it not that not a shred of a cloud mottles the unbroken azure of the sky. Nowhere else, whether in sea or river, have I ever seen such abundance of finny life.

The fisheries, though so frequently brought to our notice in the Gospels, are never alluded to in the Old Testament. Yet we know from other sources that, though the Jews left the enterprise of fishing on the sea-coast almost entirely to the Phœnicians of Tyre and Sidon, the inland fishery of the lake had considerable commercial importance. The tradition of the Talmud is, that Joshua, in the partition of the land to the northern tribes, enjoined that the fishing in the lake should be free to all comers—a franchise long since abrogated ;

for the Turkish Government farms the fisheries with all the exactions of a publican of old. However, though nearly crushed by extortions, there remain fishermen enough to enable us to illustrate the many familiar metaphors and symbols which the craft and calling of the Galilean fishermen have supplied to the Apostles and Evangelists. The fishing now, as of old, is carried on by various methods, which are alluded to in the Gospels. When St. Peter said, "I go a fishing," the net was a casting-net—the same kind as Peter and Andrew were using when first called to be fishers of men. The casting-net was used either with or without a boat. In the latter case, the fisherman, having thrown off his clothing, wades as far as he can into the sea and, with a jerk, throws out a large circular net so that it may fall flat on the surface, and then draws it in towards himself. Sometimes he will swim out a little way with the net neatly folded, and cleverly fling it before him, so that it unfolds evenly as it falls. This is the mode of capture pursued by the poorest fishermen, who cannot afford a boat. The other mode of using the net is from a boat. The vessel, though not moored, is allowed to remain motionless until a shoal of fishes is perceived close by, when the net, attached by a cord to the gunwale, is thrown over them, and the

boat gently rowed in a circle, the net, as it moves along, entangling a number of fishes. This mode of fishing is pursued chiefly by night, in order that the shoals may not be alarmed by the sight of the net. Sometimes there is a second boat a few yards ahead, with a blazing pine torch at its stern, which attracts the fish while the first boat gradually pulls round, and encircles them. This done, they row to shore, each boat having one end of the net attached to it. "They catch them in their net and gather them in their drag" (Hab. i. 15). This was evidently the mode pursued on the occasion mentioned in John xxi. 6. Even without a torch there is no difficulty in pursuing this method by night, for the shoals, swimming close to the surface, have a sheen which is visible except in pitchy darkness.

I remember once at Ain Tabighah, the ancient Bethsaida, inquiring of the miller (a solitary corn-mill is the only building remaining there) if he had any fish. He ran towards what looked like a heap of rushes, but was really a fisherman's hovel. A naked man crept out, and seizing his net, which was lying stretched on the ground, folded it and swam with it a little way from the shore, and, having cast it, returned in a semicircular course, when he gently drew it in with a few small fishes

entangled in its meshes. I noticed that these fishermen always work without any clothing save a thick felt skull-cap on their heads.

The other mode of fishing, and which has always been the most important, is by the draw-net or "seine," as we term it,—a word ultimately derived from its Greek name σαγήνη, used in the New Testament. This is a large long net, loaded and buoyed, which is carried out by a boat, cast, and then drawn in in a circle, so as to "enclose a great multitude of fishes." This is the kind of net to which our Lord compares the kingdom of heaven —the net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore.

It was very early after the calling of His Apostles—apparently after His first Sabbath at Capernaum—that Jesus visited Simon's house, and found his wife's mother sick of a great fever, as St. Luke terms it. This was in the hot, reeking plain of Gennesaret, and the fever was the well-known malarial fever of the district—an exaggerated form of ague. It is a mistake to imagine that the natives of these regions enjoy any immunity from these fevers, which so often seize travellers from more northerly climates. Though in the higher lands foreigners are the chief sufferers, yet, in the whole

Jordan valley, and especially in Gennesaret and about Jericho, the natives rarely escape ; and those whose poverty or avocations compel them to remain there during the early autumn, show the effects in their ague-stricken frames. The women about Tiberias I have noticed to be especially subject to the fever, not having the advantage enjoyed by the men of spending the greater part of their time on the lake, away from the exhalations of the land. Many were the appeals to our medical skill, and for quinine, from these poor sufferers. The words of St. Luke, "a great fever," are a technical expression for this particular malarial fever used by the Greek physicians, and exactly what we might expect from the writer, himself a physician.

Not long after this early miracle was the healing of the paralytic man brought to Him when teaching in a house at Capernaum, probably Peter's. If any of us were anxious to get through a crowd which was pressing round a house, the very last method we should dream of adopting would be to mount on to the housetop. But to the Oriental it would be a very natural idea. The houses of all, except the very poorest, are on a much more extensive scale than in our severer climate, where warmth is studied before coolness. An eastern house—such as that in which our Lord was teach-

ing, and such as may be seen in Nazareth or any other town of Syria—consists generally of a blank wall facing the street, with a narrow doorway in the centre, opening into a courtyard, to which there is no other access. Round three sides of this open square are attached chambers, sometimes wholly or partially enclosed; sometimes with only pillars supporting the roof, between which curtains may be hung. The principal, or reception, room is on the side facing the entrance. At the further end of it against the wall runs a raised daïs, with a few cushions. Besides these, and perhaps a few scraps of carpet, there is rarely any furniture. The poorer houses have no upper storey; but whether there be an upper storey or not, the roof is invariably flat, covered with earth and lime, whitewashed, and frequently pressed down by the use of a stone roller. This roof is reached by a flight of steps outside the house, and during the heat of summer the family always sleep here, sometimes shading their beds with fragile booths of oleander or other evergreen boughs. From the roof broad eaves project inwards, six feet or more in depth, supported by light rafters fastened to the roof. These are covered with matting, or in the better class of houses with shingles—*i.e.*, wooden tiles—lightly tacked together. These eaves afford shelter from

the sun to persons standing in the court below, and the favourite spot for sitting is just in front of the principal room.

This description of a Galilean house of to-day explains at once all the circumstances of the bringing of the paralytic man before Christ. The preaching of the Lord had attracted great crowds. Pharisees and doctors of the law were there, and we may be quite sure had occupied the principal seats on the platform of the reception room. The listening throng had filled not only the room, but also the whole courtyard. Our Lord would necessarily, in addressing them, stand or sit just in front of the room, where He could be heard and seen both by those within and those in the open court. The bearers of the sick man finding it impossible, from the crowd, not only to approach the great Healer, but even to enter the doorway, turned to the side of the house, and carried their burden up the outer steps on to the roof; and then standing on its edge, just over the chief room, they could easily remove the wooden tiling from the projecting rafters, and let the man down exactly in front of the Preacher. The bed on which the paralytic was borne is described by three different words by the three synoptic evangelists, St. Mark using the word κράββατον, which has come down

to us very little changed in the French *grabat*, couch, meaning simply "a little bed." The bed is very different from what we understand by the term, as may be seen by the man taking it up and carrying it away with him. The poorer classes, whether at home or on a journey, use nothing but a sort of mat, or rug, or goatskin, spread on the ground, on which they stretch themselves, covered only by their outer garment, the *'ab'eih* or woollen cloak. The bed in this passage was one of these, probably of goatskin, with a loop for a handle at each of the four corners. We have often met travellers or pilgrims with such a bed rolled up and slung across their shoulders.

Our Lord's entertainment in the house of the Pharisee Simon (or Simeon) early in His ministry also presents several incidents which modern customs illustrate. A feast or dinner in the East is conducted in a very different fashion from that which holds among ourselves. In some points of domestic life, the Oriental maintains much greater privacy than we do; in others, where we avoid publicity, he courts it. An ordinary entertainment is a public affair. The gateway of the court, and the door or curtains of the guest-chamber, stand open. The animal which is to provide the staple of the repast is killed and cooked in the open air.

A long, low table, or more often merely the great wooden dishes, are placed along the centre of the room, and low couches on either side, on which the guests, placed in order according to their rank, recline, leaning on their left elbow, with their feet turned away from the table. Every one on coming in takes off his sandals or slippers and leaves them at the door, socks or stockings being unknown. Servants stand behind the couches, and placing a wide, shallow basin on the ground, pour water over it on the feet of the guests. To omit this courtesy would be to imply that the visitor was one of very inferior rank. We can easily understand what a luxury this is to a travel-stained guest, who has walked over the hot sand of a Syrian road in summer. Behind the servants the loungers of the village crowd in, nor are they thought obtrusive in so doing. I have noticed one difference between the ancient and the modern Arab custom. It is evident that here, as in the house of Lazarus at Bethany, the host sat down with the guests. The ordinary rule now is for him to stand by and see that all his guests are duly served.

Besides omitting the water for His feet, Simon had given Jesus no kiss. To receive a guest at the present day without kissing him on either cheek as he enters, is a marked sign of contempt, or at

least a claim to a much higher social position. Once, in the interior of Tunis, I was asked by an Arab sheikh to eat in his tent. As we were sitting on the ground, round the huge platter of boiled barley and kid, my servant came behind me and whispered, "Trust him not: he has not kissed thee on either cheek." The omission implied that he looked on me as an infidel, and perhaps might not feel bound to keep faith with such. And I soon found that my henchman's caution had been most timely.

Another ordinary attention omitted by Simon, was the anointing the head of his Guest with oil. I have not observed any trace of the survival of this custom, though it is usual to present a specially honoured guest with rosewater or other perfume in a shallow dish, and sometimes to sprinkle an aromatic essence over his head. Anointing with oil is confined to great ecclesiastical functions among the Christians and Jews. The reason is obvious, since the Mussulmans always shave the head, which the Jews never did, except as a sign of mourning or for a vow. The custom of anointing the heads of honoured guests is frequently represented on Egyptian monuments. Now the woman who came in during the feast could kneel behind the Saviour, and wash His feet without

being seen by Him. Hence Simon's unspoken thought, which implied that if Jesus had been a prophet He would have felt Himself contaminated by her touch, though He did not turn to look at her ; for by the Divine power of reading the heart He would have known her character. After wiping His feet with her hair, which she loosened for the purpose, she anoints them with ointment from an alabaster box which she had brought. Alabaster was the ordinary material for boxes of unguents and perfumes, probably because the perfume slightly exhales through the partially porous substance ; and many small alabaster vases have been found in Egypt, some even retaining traces of the ointment they once contained. Of course, in this case, to anoint the feet was an infinitely higher expression of homage than to anoint the head ; and the use of ointment instead of oil was equally significant. The idea of pouring perfume on one to whom it was desired to show honour is, perhaps, the last that would occur to a Western mind. But perfumes have a much more important place in the domestic economy of the East than among ourselves.

It has often been remarked that the Teutonic and Sclavonic races are more indifferent to scents than any others. The poorest Orientals spend

money for the gratification of the olfactory nerves. The woman who goes to market with a few piastres to supply the family needs for the week, would think her purchases incomplete unless she had spent a *para*, the sixth of a penny, on some tuberoses, or other powerfully scented flowers. The men one meets in the street have a flower in their fingers, at which they are perpetually sniffing. The Jews have a pretty custom which I have noticed when I have been at a synagogue. The worship over, some one at the door hands a fresh citron or lemon to his neighbour, who passes it on, and each one, as he takes it, smells it and says, "Blessed be Jehovah who gives us all things good, even pleasant smells for our noses." When the Orientals remark on the olfactory obtuseness of the Westerns, the latter may retort, as is said of Cologne, that the ordinary odours and filth of Eastern cities are so offensive, that perfumes are absolutely necessary to counteract them. When it is stated that the woman broke the alabaster box, what is evidently meant is the seal by which the lid was secured, and the perfume prevented from evaporating. We see similar boxes, only made of richly coloured glass instead of alabaster, at the present day in the bazaars of Damascus, containing the attar of roses for which that

city is celebrated, and which are very elaborately sealed.

The manufacture of perfumes and unguents is an important industry in Damascus and many other Asiatic cities. But spikenard is not among these. It is still the most costly of all perfumes in Syria, being imported only from India, where the aromatic plant, called by botanists *Nardostachys jatamansi*, is found in Nepal, by the upper waters of the Ganges. It is curious that the first mention of the Ganges by ancient writers is as the river by the banks of which spikenard is obtained, and at the same time they add that it is a mountain plant. We may well conceive the costliness of an unguent brought in those days by Arabian merchants from such an immense distance.

We shall not find a statement in Scripture, however trivial it may at first sight appear, which is not there for a purpose, and has not a meaning. Thus, our Lord's discourse with His disciples as they walked, when He asked them "Whom do men say that I am?" is prefaced with the remark that they had gone into the parts (*i.e.*, the villages) of Cæsarea Philippi. Why should St. Mark be careful to tell us that the momentous question was asked in that neighbourhood? There is much in the topographical setting, if we may so term it, of

the question. I do not mean the natural scenery, though that is among the most lovely and varied in all Syria. It was on one of the southern spurs of snow-capped Hermon, whose dome towers 10,000 feet above the plain. At the base of the mountain here bursts forth the great fountain of Jordan, one of the largest single springs in the world—a river full-grown at birth. On a little knoll, close by that mighty fountain, once stood the temple of Dan, with its golden calf, the centre of the idolatrous worship of the northern tribes. Park-like glades, studded with noble oaks, spread on both sides of the wide valley which slopes down to the plain of Jordan. But it was not on this account that the place is mentioned. It was the northern limit of our Lord's journeyings, just on the frontier of the land of Israel. At Cæsarea Philippi He was in one of the holy places of classical paganism. In a lovely glen, where magnificent streams burst from the foot of lofty cliffs, everywhere overhung with luxuriant foliage, the Greeks had consecrated a grotto to the worship of their rustic god Pan. Alongside of this a Gentile city had sprung up, named after the heathen divinity, Paneas—a name which it still retains, slightly changed to Banias. But Herod had built a sumptuous temple; and Philip the Tetrarch, who ruled

at this time, had beautified and enlarged it, and changed its name to Cæsarea Philippi, combining flattery to his suzerain with the endeavour to preserve his own memory. High up, on the face of the enclosing cliffs, was many a sculpture and tablet deeply chiselled, remaining intact to this day, carved in honour of the deity of the place and his licentious rites.

These rock-hewn carvings must have caught the eye of the Lord and His disciples as they passed up towards the city, above which is the probable scene of the Transfiguration. And perhaps He had them in view, when, thinking of a far more imperishable rock, He said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build My Church." For our rock is not as theirs. The Master and His disciples were here standing on the very borderline of Judaism and paganism. They looked south on the land of Naphtali, then studded with synagogues. Beneath them, where the waters of Paneas joined the Jordan, were the desolate ruins which recorded the former apostasy of the Israelitish kingdom. Behind them were the gorgeous buildings which illustrated the two most debasing extremes of the sensuous idolatry of the Greek and Roman world ; substituting, on the one hand, for the worship of the Eternal Power and Godhead

the materialistic worship of nature in its lowest form, and on the other, prostituting the human conscience to the purposes of a tyrannical and brutal government. But around our Lord stood the germ of the living Church—that little band which represented the Israel from whom Christ came, an isolated and lonely race ; alone, too, in their strong faith in a coming Deliverer, who should overthrow all that mighty fabric of idolatry—a faith which, to those who were aliens from their commonwealth, seemed the most crazy of dreams. In such a spot, and amidst such surroundings, does the Lord Jesus elicit definitely, and for the first time, the emphatic declaration, " Thou art the Christ." As though He had in His mind the hopes and wants of the various races of mankind which He alone could meet, on that frontier spot, He would break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Here He unveiled the power which should free men's consciences from the thrall of pagan superstition and sensuality. Here He foretold how the hopes of oppressed and downcast Israel should be fulfilled, while all alike should, in the answer to the great question, find light and peace and freedom.

It was after this that we read of children being brought, though not for the first time, to Jesus.

There are two beliefs—we may perhaps call them superstitions—rooted in the Oriental mind: the power of the eye, and the power of the touch. We know that many persons have a power of fascinating by the eye, and, riveting their gaze on their subjects, can hold them for a time. Hence arose the superstition of the evil eye. The Western stranger must beware of looking, too, at a child, especially an infant, or he may soon find himself surrounded by a crowd of infuriated women, who fear he is bewitching their little ones. But side by side with this is a faith in the efficacy of the touch of any holy, wise, or pure person. The old city of Askelon is now in ruins, and grand and wonderful ruins they are; but outside the walls is a large Mohammedan village, or rather town. I had gone into a house to see some antiques which were offered for sale, and left outside in the street my young daughter with a native servant. Hearing an unusual commotion without, I hastily left my antiquarian, and found the whole female population of the place, with their babes, crowding round my daughter, while my servant was vehemently gesticulating and brandishing a stick to keep off the crowd. As soon as I ascertained the cause of the excitement, I rebuked my man, who, with true Oriental pride, esteemed it a degradation for

an English lady to notice poor Fellahîn, and my daughter gladly complied with their wishes. They had never seen a Western woman before, for Askelon is quite out of the ordinary tourist's route; and, wonder-stricken by the sight of the smiling, fair-skinned, light-haired girl, perfectly at home on her side-saddle (another wonder for them), they were sure that her touch would bring blessing to their little ones. When she began by taking a babe in her arms and kissing it, they explained that there was no need for that,—the touch of her fingers was quite enough. The babes in arms were touched on the cheek, and the little toddling ones on their head. The ceremony ended, we rode off, amidst the blessings and the grateful looks of these simple women. *Salem Aleikum* ("Peace be with you") was ejaculated on all sides, and responded to by *Ali Selma* ("On thee be peace"). Where could we have found or seen a more vivid illustration of the Gospel narrative, "They brought young children to Him that He should touch them, and His disciples rebuked those that brought them"?

III

JOURNEYING IN THE EAST

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THE requisites for an Eastern journey are few and simple—scrip, purse, and shoes; though now, when the country is not under the settled rule which prevailed in the days of the Romans, a weapon of some kind, or at least a stout cudgel, must be added. The equipment was the same many ages before that period: for Homer ("Odyssey," 17–197) describes Ulysses as travelling with a purse, a bag, and a staff, using the same word for scrip or bag which occurs in the New Testament. The purse is a small leather bag, hung round the neck under the shirt by country folk, but concealed in the folds of the voluminous girdle worn by townsmen. It contains the owner's money and other valuables, especially the signet ring so treasured by every Arab, who always carries it in this purse. The scrip is a bag of larger dimensions, slung across the shoulder over the outer garment, generally made of leather, but, in the case of the poorest, of flexible matting, in which

provision for the journey, usually olives, dried figs, and thin barley cakes rolled up, or folded square, is carried. The word used for shoes is different from that for sandals. The latter are simply soles of undressed hide, with the hair on the upper surface, and fastened with thongs, always carried by the traveller, who walks barefoot on sandy or grassy ground, but who finds them absolutely necessary for the rocky and stony paths of the hill country. Shoes, or rather, as we should call them, slippers, have upper leathers and heels, and are made of softer material. They are worn by horsemen, and for use in the house are frequently brightly coloured. Our Lord's charge to His Apostles to take neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes, implied that they were to take nothing not absolutely necessary for travelling, but to depend solely on the hospitality of those to whom they preached, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. The prohibition of shoes, not sandals, is especially directed against anything that might savour of worldly show or luxury. Perhaps the command was suggested by the injunction of the scribes in the Gemara, "Let no man enter into the Mount of the Temple either with his staff in his hand, or with his shoes on his feet, or with money bound up in his linen, or with a purse hanging on his

back." As though our Lord would teach that your mission is as holy as that of visiting the Temple; therefore, let no worldly matters intrude.

The Arab of the present day will travel in the desert with yet simpler provision. He will start for a journey of several days with no provision beyond two skin bags slung on his shoulder, the one full of water, the other containing barley meal. When he halts for the night, he gathers a few twigs and roots of the *retem* ("juniper" of 1 Kings xix. 4) and other desert shrubs, kindles them on a few flat stones with the flint and steel he always carries; takes a handful of meal from his bag, kneads it with a little water on a flat stone, and rolls it out with his hands into a thin cake. He then brushes aside the hot embers, puts the dough on the heated stones, heaps the hot ashes upon them, and his cake is soon baked. On this simple fare he will cheerfully travel for several days. Thus was Elijah fed when, on his journey to Horeb, the angelic messenger wakened him, and he found the fare of a desert wanderer ready prepared to his hand—a cake baked on the coals (or rather "hot stones"), and a cruse (leathern bottle) of water.

In the account of the miracle of the feeding the four thousand (Mark viii.), we have an illustration

of the wondrous attractive power of Jesus afforded us, though it is not expressed. They had been with Him three days. Now no Eastern peasant would think of leaving home without having in his wallet two or three loaves, or flat thin cakes of barley bread folded up after the fashion of a napkin, enough for a day's food or perhaps for more. The people had heard where He was, and knew that they could not return to the cities of Gennesaret the same night. They would therefore store in these wallets food sufficient for one day at least. With economy, and those who had a more liberal supply no doubt sharing it with others, they were able to subsist for a second day. But now, on the third day, their stores were utterly exhausted. Yet, still spell-bound, they hung on His words of love and mercy, and all absorbed, they forgot the needs of the body for the time. Even the Apostles, who, accustomed to remain out with their Master, did not usually forget to take bread, had not sufficient left for their own needs; for the lad, who is mentioned in the other Gospels as carrying the provisions, was evidently in attendance on them.

Even now, with much smaller crowds, companies have to scatter for food and shelter. On one occasion we fell in with the caravan of Russian

pilgrims, about two thousand in number, on their way from keeping Easter at Jerusalem, to visit the holy places of Nazareth. They had encamped the preceding night at Samaria, where provision had been made for them. But on the following day, they had not made the progress they expected, and found themselves towards evening in the Sahel or plain of Arrâbeh. Having neither tents nor food with them, they at once dispersed up the hillsides in all directions, seeking supplies in the different villages, where they remained till the morning. Soon after sunrise they mustered at the camp, where the few who had asses with them had halted and kindled fires. In this fashion must the hungry crowds at Bethsaida have dispersed, but for the sympathising intervention of their Divine Teacher.

It was in such a caravan as that just described that Joseph and Mary went with the child Jesus to the feast of the Passover. To visit the place which the Lord had chosen, to set His name there, was the duty of every male Jew at the three great feasts of the year. This command did not extend to women, but, according to the teaching of the rabbinical school of Hillel, women were expected to attend the Temple at the feast of the Passover, though not at the other festivals. From Nazareth to Jerusalem was a journey of four days, as journeys

are made in the East. But such journeys are thought little of among an agricultural people, whose labour in the fields is interrupted by long periods of rest, between harvest time and ploughing, and between seed time and harvest, during which intervals all the festivals occurred. To the present day such pilgrimages, and far longer ones, are habitually undertaken by Christians and Moslems alike, not as matters of religious duty, but of high religious merit. In the Mohammedan system, we know that pilgrimages, especially those to Mecca, Medina, and Jebe, Arafat, have an important place. But there are many others, less arduous and dangerous, such as those to Nebi Moussa, near Jordan, and Jebel Haroun (Mount Hor), which are believed to impart the odour of sanctity to the pilgrims. The Christians of the Eastern Churches hold the pilgrimage to Jerusalem at Easter, to the place of our Lord's baptism in the Jordan, to Nazareth and Bethlehem, in no less esteem.

The pilgrim caravans often consist of many hundred members, and they travel exactly as such parties have journeyed since the days of Abraham. Let us take the Greek pilgrimage from Jerusalem to Nazareth, which I have more than once joined for part of the way. The ceremonies and festivities of Eastertide in the Holy City being over, and the

Jordan having been visited and bathed in, Nazareth is the next great halting place. The day and hour of the start are publicly known long before-hand. Early in the morning, before daybreak, all are astir. The women and children collect outside the gate, many with very young children on asses, and a few on camels, and with a few drivers and donkey owners, start off in wild confusion, amidst a babel of tongues. The halting place is of course arranged beforehand. The men sit idly about, or lounge with their pipes for another hour or more, being quite certain of overtaking the family cavalcade in time for the night's encampment. This is always reached about an hour or more before sunset. The women busily occupy themselves in gathering what brushwood they can find for fuel and cooking. Few, if any, possess the luxury of a tent, and the crowd is scattered in groups round the various little fires. At Ain Haramiyeh, "the robbers' spring," name of suspicious omen, is the first halt north of Jerusalem, where a copious fountain waters a long narrow valley. The start next morning is made in the same fashion as on the previous day ; and the men for the most part spend the night apart from the groups of women and children. The boys of debatable age may be seen, some with their fathers, others with the women. There seems to be no strict rule,

and a lad who mistrusted his walking powers would probably prefer the earlier and slower caravan.

We may be very sure than in the unchanging East the fashion of these pilgrimages is exactly what it was two thousand years ago. How easily, then, might a lad of twelve years old be supposed by his father to be with the women; and by his mother to have joined himself to the men! His absence would not even be suspected by either party, until they met at the camp at night. The next day would be spent in walking back to Jerusalem; and then, on the morning of the third day, they discover Him sitting in one of the porches of the Court of the Women, where the Rabbis were accustomed to deliver their lectures and expositions, with their pupils all sitting in a circle on the ground round their favourite teachers. So Saul sat at the feet of Gamaliel; and so have I seen the scholars of the Rabbis sitting round them in the humble lecture-halls of Tiberias, which is now the great educational centre for the Jews of Palestine.

On his journeys, as at home, the Oriental has no practical idea of the value of time. He will press on alone, or when with a single companion, for hours at a time in silence; but when once arrested by any passing incident, or when he meets an acquaintance or a stranger, he will dawdle away

the best part of the day. Our Lord's command to His Apostles, "Salute no man by the way," is one, the value of which every Eastern traveller can fully appreciate. There is no discourtesy implied in obedience to the injunction. You may be hurrying to your pre-arranged camping-ground or village, and the sun is rapidly nearing the western horizon. Your dragoman recognises a traveller whom you meet, or, it may be, accosts an entire stranger. The greeting commences by a reciprocal invocation of peace. Both halt. The conversation proceeds in a series of meaningless inquiries after health, welfare of self and kinsfolk. Then it gradually slides into inquiries as to whence each started in the morning, and their destination for the night, with ejaculations of "Allah be praised!" and the like, after each reply. You impatiently sit on your horse a few yards in advance, but you turn, and see them composing themselves to sit down on the wayside, while they interchange all the small gossip of their respective villages, and the various rumours of the bazaars, in which employment ten minutes is easily wasted, and the sun is setting ere your loitering guide comes up to you again. Often in such a predicament have I recalled this command. The Rabbis forbade a man to salute when he was mourning for the dead; and in all times of sorrow,

or which were unsuitable for espousals or marriages, men were to refrain from saluting. Neither were Rabbis or teachers of the law to indulge in salutations, but merely to acknowledge them and pass on. From this we gather that our Lord's command means, that the disciples, urgently pressed on their errand, were simply, when accosted with the conventional salutations of "Peace be with thee!" to reply "On thee be peace!" and to pass on without halting. But when they enter a house, the salutation has a much deeper meaning. It is a message of peace to the family, an offer from a messenger of the Divine One. If so recognised, and not treated as a mere formal courtesy, the bearers of peace will be received, and the Son of peace will be found in that house.

When the risen Saviour overtakes the two disciples going to Emmaus and inquires of them, "What communications are these . . . as ye walk?" the incident illustrates their intense earnestness; for to gesticulate and vehemently discuss, as he walks, is not the ordinary habit of the Oriental. Fond as he is of gossip when sitting in the *café*, patient and imperturbable as he listens to the story-teller by the camp fire, he walks solemnly and silently with his comrade on the road. Energetic discussion, as he journeys, is apart from his

character, and wholly alien to his ideas of dignity, which he never forgets, unless in the case of a funeral. It is just such a passing touch in the narrative, which illustrates its accuracy, as told by one of the party ; while such an animated conversation would naturally justify the passer-by in interposing with his inquiries.

We have described the fashion and incidents of the journey of the ordinary traveller or pilgrim. Very different is the progress of a Royal personage or other great man. Then there are great preparations — messengers, heralds, and labourers are busied long before the prince commences his journey. The road must be prepared. The idea of a highway such as we know and enjoy in Western lands is non-existent in the East ; the phrase corresponding to our English "Queen's highway," *Ed derb sultani*, the Sultan's road, is common enough, but it is a mere track. The only roadmakers are the feet of camels and horses, which for generation after generation, treading each one in the footsteps of its predecessors, have worn steps in the most slippery rocks, or beaten a hard path on the sands. The track winds deviously up and down the hills, or by the sides of the winter torrents ; every one walking round the same boulder, making a circuit round the same hollow ; no man ever dreaming of

cutting, levelling, banking-up, or draining a road. Fences, of course, there are none, and should a rock, or even a clump of thorn bushes, stand in the way, no one has ever cleared one or the other. The utmost that has been done is that in the plains a ditch is frequently cut by the side of the path, which drains the water in winter, while the earth from it has slightly raised the track above the soft surrounding plain. It was not so in Roman times. Those mighty builders engineered and paved their roads, even into the recesses of the Arabian wilderness. But these are all abandoned now, and the dislodged and upturned paving stones render it impossible to use the highways along which for centuries the chariots dashed, and the imperial legionary tramped. It is more than probable that the arterial roads were paved, long before the Roman occupation, by Solomon and his successors. It is scarcely possible that chariots should have been in constant use, and have been brought up out of Egypt, unless there were paved roads, very different from the camel tracks of the patriarchs and the moderns, for their employment; and some of the Roman roads, notably that from Hebron southwards, still show traces of their having been constructed on the top of earlier and rougher pavements.

But it would ill consort with the Oriental idea of a monarch's dignity, that a ruler of men should have to turn aside for any obstacle. Let a Sultan or a Shah propose a royal progress, and then all is changed. Pioneers are hurriedly sent forward along the whole route; the neighbouring population is at once impressed and compelled to work without pay. The requisitioned villagers gather out the stones, fill in the dry watercourses, scarp the rocks, cut the sides of the hills, and level and guard the track. No obstacle delays the monarch's advance. "Cast up, cast up the highway, gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Twice it has been my good fortune to see such preparations. On one occasion the Imperial heir of Austria was to visit the Pasha of Jerusalem. At that time there was not, as there is now, a carriage road from Jaffa (which is still the only passable track for a wheel conveyance in the country), much less a railway; and heavy rains had washed the road into a mere rugged watercourse. A crowd of labourers and Turkish soldiers were sent forth to level the track with their mattocks and shovels, and their officers prancing about on horseback, might be seen pointing to the heaps of detritus as they passed, and calling out, "Gather out the stones." Thus the road was made straight

and smooth for the time. But this lasts not long. The first thunderstorm washes all this loose earth away, and the old rocks and watercourses reappear.

On another occasion, Midhat Pasha, the then Wali of Damascus, was about to make a state progress through his province to Aleppo. A cloud of Bashi-bazouks (irregular cavalry) poured out in advance, a few hours before His Highness was to start on his richly-caparisoned steed, and proclaimed with trumpet and kettledrum the advent of the great man. His camp équipage accompanied them, and the tents were pitched and the cooking fire kindled at the appointed spot, long before the shades of evening closed in. Though the road had been thus prepared, a further mounted body-guard immediately preceded him, heralding his approach, and forcing every traveller to stand aside till he had passed. One poor man, with his laden ass, was forced into the ditch. (This was on the plain of Hamath.) The kindly Wali saw the incident, halted, and ordered his people to help the man out. Then looking round, and seeing a Moslem cemetery, with its tall grave-slabs, hard by, he bade them take two long stones, and lay them across the ditch, to prevent the recurrence of such an accident. Some one deferentially interposed

that they were gravestones, and would thus be put to a secular use. "Man," was the reply, "they cover the bodies of the faithful; and I am a believer, and await the resurrection. Their removal will lighten the labour of the faithful, on whom they lie heavy, when they are bidden to rise; while here they may save another son of the faithful from falling into the pit."

Thus unchanged are Eastern fashions from the day when Isaiah proclaimed: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." We are reminded also of the prophecy, "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." For a royal personage there are three sets of heralds: the first, on the day before his arrival; the second, on the morning of the day; and the third, whom we should call outriders, immediately in front. The preaching of repentance by the Baptist is thus compared by the inspired lyrist to the outrunner's torch, casting its light on those that sat in darkness, and rousing them to prepare to receive their Messiah. But the torch disappears when the dayspring arises: so the forerunner is no more seen when the Heavenly Monarch makes Himself known in all His fulness.

It was mentioned above that the preparing the

way is all performed by forced and unpaid labour. This system of forced labour is still the curse of most Eastern nations. We read that Solomon gave Jeroboam "charge over all the labour of the house of Joseph" (R.V.), *i.e.*, he had the directions of the forced labour for public works, the "heavy yoke" of which the people so bitterly complained to Rehoboam. To this day for all public works the governor or Pasha can command the unpaid labour of all the *fellahin* or country folk. Not only is a *levée en masse* made to clear the roads and furbish up the streets for a royal progress, but often the exaction is enforced for works of luxury, as royal palaces, or for works of irrigation, from which the labourers are only a portion of those benefited. The oppression of Israel in Egypt has had its counterpart ever since. Whenever we gaze admiringly on the stupendous structures of Egypt, or explore the mounds of Nimroud, we may not forget the hard bondage and the cruel serfdom which raised these monuments of selfish power and wealth. Even for the building of the Temple, Solomon had raised a levy of thirty thousand out of all Israel, when labour was exacted for one month out of every three; besides one hundred and fifty thousand serfs, labourers, and hewers. We may note that Adoniram, who was Solomon's officer

over this levy or tribute (1 Kings v. 14), was the first victim of the popular fury on the revolt from Rehoboam.

In Egypt this cruel system of *corvée* ground down the peasantry up to the time of the English occupation. I have myself seen the whole male population of several villages driven together, at the bayonet's point, to toil for weeks at some *barrage* or irrigation work, where they received only the barest rations, and their families were left to starve or live as they could meanwhile, with no provision whatever from the Government. Even under French rule, in the militarily governed portion of Algeria, the system has only been abolished within the last few years; and while travelling in the Algerian Sahara, under the sanction of the French Government, I found that all the camels and Arab guides provided for me were under the *corvée*, and that payment was of free grace, and too often omitted. We have an interesting evidence of the antiquity of this (to the rulers very convenient) practice in an inscription in the pass of Abilene, well known to travellers from Damascus to the Cedars. There is a magnificently engineered aqueduct, and a chariot road parallel to it, hewn in the side of the cliff till it reaches the site of the ancient city; and at the end is a long Latin inscription on

the face of the rock, laudatory of the Roman Emperor, and of the Prefect under whose beneficent auspices this work of public utility was accomplished. But below is added in differently shaped letters, and evidently by another hand, *Impensis Abilenetorum*, "At the cost of the people of Abilene." Moreover, on examination it is seen that this significant addendum has been carefully filled in with cement, and no doubt was concealed for the time, to be preserved for future ages.

IV

EASTERN DWELLINGS AND EASTERN FEASTS

IV

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THE ordinary house of the peasant and of the family just above the peasant class has already been described. But all houses of the better class, though constructed on the same plan, have two stories. The upper storey is called *beit-seify*, or summer house; the ground floor is *beit-ʾhetawy*, or winter house. The upper, open to the verandah, is much cooler than the lower. Fireplaces or stoves are unknown. But in the winter house, instead of a fireplace, there is a shallow depression in the middle of the room in which is placed a large earthenware vessel filled with lighted charcoal. As soon as the fumes have been dissipated, a board is placed over the glowing embers, and a carpet spread over it, by which the heat is retained for hours. Wood is often used instead of charcoal. It was by such a fire as this that Jehoiakim sat in the winter house when he burnt the roll of Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi. 23).

In all great houses the watchman is an im-

portant personage. In the East, which knows not the happy and secure municipal arrangements of Western lands, every man must be his own policeman. The State punishes, but leaves the prevention and detection of theft and robbery to the individual interested. Not only in the watch-towers of the vineyards, but in the houses and villages, the watchman is needful. It is only in walled cities, where there is a garrison, that the security of the place rests in the hands of the authorities. And so it was of old. The unchanged arrangements of the houses explain the watchman's duties. In the castle of the great man there was a tower over the gateway, and on the roof of this he kept a look-out during the day. Such was the watchman of the palace of Jezreel, who recognised the charioteering of Jehu as he drove furiously up the plain of Esdraelon. But the private house had no such tower, nor was there any look-out post. Not one of the rooms has a window on the outside. In the better class of houses there is frequently a second inner square or yard, a *patio* as the Spaniards would call it, and in both courts the upper storey has a balcony projecting all round the area, by which to pass from chamber to chamber. The only window looking outwards is a grille over the doorway, sometimes projecting in a sort of bay

and closely latticed, by which the ladies may peep unseen up and down the street. Such is the lattice from which the mother of Sisera is imagined to look, and through which Jezebel ironically greeted Jehu, little wotting of the faithless chamberlains behind her, ever ready to worship the rising sun.

Below this solitary casement and within the gateway is the porter's lodge. As the door is always kept fastened, he must ever be on the alert, for there could be no greater indignity than for the master or any visitor to be kept waiting after they have knocked. The porter on the watch at once demands the name before he opens ; and, as in the parable of the Ten Virgins, he refuses to open at all to unwelcome guests. In ordinary houses of more moderate size there is no porter's lodge within the gateway, and the servant has some distance to traverse before reaching the gate. Thus in Acts xii. Rhoda could at once, when she had crossed the yard, recognise Peter's voice in reply to her question ; but some short time would elapse before she could recross the court and mount to the upper chamber where the disciples were assembled, and return again to open the gate. The minute touches and expressions of the whole of Acts xii. are full of significance, showing that the account must have been furnished by an eye-witness.

Where there is a porter, as the family usually sleep upstairs, and in summer on the flat roof, the access to which is generally by the flight of steps outside only, the safety of the inside depends on the vigilance of the porter, who is the only member of the household on the area. The Eastern thief does not attempt a surprise by the door; he digs through the wall of the house behind—a comparatively easy task where the walls are, as is usually the case, built of stone and clay instead of cement, and his tool is a mattock, a sort of hoe and pickaxe combined. I have frequently, when travelling in Mesopotamia and Northern Syria in summer, slept on the housetop with the family who had offered me hospitality. Where there was a porter we were literally locked out for the night, and had to summon him to admit us for our ablutions in the morning; but often in humbler families the master of the house carefully locked the door below, and then followed us up the steps to the roof of the empty house. The Christian watchman has a two-fold duty: first, to guard the door of his heart against intruders and to be ever ready to recognise and obey his Master's voice; and secondly, to be alert against surprises, lest the thief break in and temptation assault him on the unguarded or unexpected side.

When our Saviour tells His disciples, "In My Father's house are many mansions"—*i.e.*, abiding-places or resting-places—He suggests the illustration either of a palace or a caravanserai. The word is applied elsewhere to chambers in either of these, and also to the resting-places on great roads—simple sheds with seats, which it is considered a work of merit to maintain in all Eastern countries, from Turkey to China and Japan. Round the area of the temple at Jerusalem were vast numbers of chambers, for the accommodation, not only of the priests and Levites attending in their courses, and of the prophets and prophetesses who wished to be in continual attendance on the worship of Jehovah; but also for any others who from time to time resorted to the sanctuary. And so within the gates of the palaces of Eastern monarchs were many quadrangles, each containing series of chambers for the use, not only of retainers, but of visitors and strangers. The thoughts of the disciples are by our Lord's illustration lifted from the limited accommodation of the earthly temple to the inexhaustible provision for rest and repose in the heavenly temple, in which, even when all shall have entered in, "yet there is room."

Sometimes a guest-chamber was built on the roof. It was such a chamber that the lady of

Shunem proposed to her husband to make for the convenience of the prophet "on the wall" (2 Kings iv. 8), *i.e.*, accessible from the outside by the steps on the wall, so that the visitor's movements might be free and unnoticed when he wished for privacy Such guest-chambers are very general now in the towns, especially in Jerusalem and Nablous. It was perhaps in such a one that the new Teacher received Nicodemus by night. We may infer from John xix. 27 that the beloved disciple had a home in Jerusalem, however humble it may have been, up one of the narrow winding streets of the Holy City. It would certainly, like every other city dwelling, where ground space was limited, have its guest-chamber on the roof—a large room, lightly constructed, and not occupying the whole area. The guest-chamber could thus be reached, like the prophet's at Shunem, by the outer steps, without attracting the observation of the inmates of the dwelling below. Here, in that simply furnished spacious room, with only the oil lamp suspended in the centre and a few mats and one or two pillows on the floor, the great Teacher sat. The wind on that spring night—for it was the Passover time—sweeping fitfully down the narrow streets would be plainly heard on that roof, and supply at once the illustration, "The wind

bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof."

I take it that the "large upper room furnished" (Luke xxii. 12) was an apartment of this kind. The disciples do not accost the man, but simply follow him to the house; and then they inquire for the "guest-chamber"—τὸ κατάλυμα, the resting-place—where their Master and they might eat the Passover. The owner, evidently himself a disciple, shows them, not the ordinary κατάλυμα, or resting-place, of an Eastern house—an open hall or rather shed, opening into the courtyard, for which alone they asked—but the large upper room of the house, as described above, furnished, *i.e.* prepared, for the guests at the supper by couches or mattresses spread round the low table and covered with damask or tapestry work, as we may see in the best Moslem houses in Damascus at the present day, on which the company reclined when eating. This upper chamber, or *alijah* as it is called, has the advantage of being accessible without passing through the house. We must bear in mind that, though the Passover itself was by the original institution to be eaten standing, this rule was not held to apply to the supper. According to the Talmud, slaves ate their meals standing; and this reclining was to indicate how Israel had passed

from bondage into freedom. The very poorest, therefore must partake of the supper recumbent on a couch, to indicate safety, rest, and liberty.

We have another use of the housetop—viz., for privacy and retirement—mentioned in Acts x. 9. Peter had retired at noon, one of the stated times of prayer (Dan. vi. 10). The flat roof was surrounded by a parapet, which shielded the visitor from observation from the street. In the case of the house at Jaffa pointed out as Simon's, and which is very possibly on the true site, any person on the roof is shut out from view, excepting from some similar housetops higher up, and has before him only a wide prospect seawards.

It has been mentioned that there are no windows in the poorer class of houses. This is incidentally illustrated in our Lord's parable of the lost piece of money, when, after appealing to the men by the parable of the Lost Sheep, He turns to the women of the crowds, and brings His teaching home to their experience. They knew well what it was, in the dark recesses of their Galilean cottage, to lose one of the silver pieces, the treasured heirlooms which they strung on their head-dresses; for the allusion here is not to money carried in a purse, but to the coins which formed the *semadi* worn by every Nazareth matron to this day. The

semadi is formed of silver coins pierced through the centre, and strung on a pad on each side of the head, the larger coins at the bottom and the smaller at the top, meeting, if the wearer be rich enough, on the forehead. These treasures are the exclusive property of the woman. Father, brother, or husband has no power over them, and they descend from mother to daughter. How poor that woman must be who had only ten such pieces, every traveller in Galilee will know full well. How keenly would she feel the loss of even one coin from her scanty head-dress, and how carefully would she search her house for the missing treasure! And need, too, has she to light a candle; for in a Galilean cottage, if there be an inner chamber, it receives scarcely a ray of light from the door, the only aperture for ventilation or light. In this inner chamber, or where it is wanting, on a raised daïs at the back of the living room, are kept all the stores of the household—sacks of corn, jars of wine, heaps of olives, and, moreover, the mattocks, yokes, ploughs, and other implements of husbandry—and without a candle her search would be futile. When the treasure was found, how would the happy owner tell her tale of anxiety and evoke the congratulations of her neighbours as they gathered at the fountain, the evening rendez-

vous of the women of an Eastern village! In seizing on these incidents of daily life among the poor, our Lord would show to them at once how He who came, as the poorest of the poor, to seek and to save the lost, welcomed the meanest, and could sympathise in the anxieties of the humblest.

A clear conception of the arrangements of a great house or palace, such as has been described a few pages back, will enable us without difficulty to follow the movements of St. Peter on the night of the Passion. Our Saviour was led, after His examination before Annas, to the high-priest's house. This house stood on the northern slope of Mount Moriah, and would consist, first, of the ordinary courtyard, with cloisters round it, and at the further end a door opening into the inner court, round which would be chambers two stories high, the lower chiefly offices, and the rooms of the attendants; while above, reached by a wide staircase, were the reception or audience-halls of the high-priest. There could be no difficulty in any one entering the outer court, which is scarcely looked upon as part of the house; but the porter or, as it happened to be in this case, the porteress, sat between the two courts, to the inner of which only those who had business there would be admitted. St. John, being personally known, had

gone in along with the official posse; but, until passed in through the intervention of his brother-disciple, St. Peter had had to remain in the outer court. In the centre of the inner court, open of course to the sky, in the cold March night (for at Jerusalem, 1,750 feet above the sea, the spring nights are bitterly cold, notwithstanding the low latitude), the attendants had piled up a charcoal fire in one of those shallow braziers which form part of the furniture of every Eastern house. The Greek word *αὐλή*, rendered "hall" and "palace" in A.V., is better translated "court"—*i.e.*, "court-yard"—in R.V.

From Eastern dwellings we pass naturally to Eastern feasts and entertainments. There are Scriptural allusions to feasts of many kinds: the royal feast of an Assyrian or Persian king, the feast of a wealthy man to his neighbours, of a father on the marriage of a son, the feast to the welcome though unexpected stranger; to the simple feast of the desert sheikh—to say nothing of religious festivals, Mosaic or heathen, treated of elsewhere. To begin with regal entertainments. The lavish profusion and variety of Solomon's table (1 Kings iv. 22, 23) gives some idea of what must have been the expenditure of the yet more ostentatious feasting in the palaces of the Baby-

lonians and Persians, so frequently alluded to in Daniel, Esther, and Nehemiah, and of which ancient writers give us accounts. In a quaint old Latin book by a Dutch traveller, Engelbert Kœmpfer, I lately met with a description of a dinner of the Shah of Persia two hundred and fifty years ago. The dining pavilion was erected in his gardens, open at the sides. At the further end were two hundred musicians. The Shah sat alone on an elevated platform at the upper end, surrounded by his guards at a respectful distance. The whole of the ground was covered with gorgeous carpets. There were neither chairs nor tables, and the guests sat in semicircles, so that all should face the sovereign. The first semicircle comprised only the highest dignitaries and foreign ministers. The Shah's courtiers occupied the second rank, and so on, till the hindmost places were filled by the youths in training for the public service. The dishes were brought in, and after the sovereign was served, they were passed on through the long rows until six hundred attendants had feasted, all sitting on the carpets ; and at each fresh dish they prostrated themselves before their lord. It is interesting when we turn to the Scriptural instance of Daniel and his three youthful companions in the court of Babylon, to observe that the same author,

writing on the modern court of Persia, adds that no one about the court was allowed to buy any food, or eat anything but what came from the Shah's stores, as to do so would be to signify that his hospitality was scanty. We can easily see that if the arrangements at the court of Nebuchadnezzar were like the later Persian fashion, to eat the food offered publicly to an idol and then passed on, would have been a direct act of idol homage.

Not less public, though on a smaller scale, are the feasts given by private individuals of wealth, whether in celebration of any public or local occurrence, or of any domestic event. A feast such as that instanced by our Lord, "A certain man made a great supper," would be very familiar to His hearers, and is really a public, and not a social and private, gathering. It is rarely given, excepting on some special occasion, such as a marriage or the birth of a son, or at the conclusion of the harvest or the vintage. It is quite distinct from the entertainment of strangers or friends, when a kid or a lamb suffices for the feast, and the host waits on his guests, as Abraham did when he received the angels at Mamre. On the greater occasion, when a calf or a bullock is to be slain, the number of the guests is very large, since the whole of the food must be consumed on the day when

the animal is killed; the Orientals never attempting to keep any flesh overnight. Preparations are made some days in advance, and the coming feast is announced to the whole neighbourhood. The Arab or the Syrian to-day strictly observes the Mosaic injunction, "Thou shalt not . . . shut thine hand from thy poor brother," and takes care to feed the hungry. In the invitations no distinction of social rank is regarded; but very marked distinctions are made in the relative position of the guests when they arrive, and the placing of them in their proper places is one of the most important duties of the host. The intended guests having been apprized some days before of the coming feast, servants are again sent, on the morning of the day, to remind those who have been invited; and the omission of this second summons would be a grievous breach of etiquette, equivalent to a cancelling of the previous more general notification. To refuse the second summons would be an insult which is equivalent among the Arab tribes to a declaration of war.

I may give an illustration of this feeling. I had been travelling under an escort of the Adwân, and arriving at the frontier of their territory, had to pass to the Beni Sakk'r, a tribe with which I was already, from previous visits, on very friendly

terms. A portion of their tribe was encamped near the boundary line. The Adwân declined to cross, but sent me alone to their old rivals, with whom they were at the time on terms which may be called an armed neutrality. They sent with me a sheep, which I was told was for my own use only. The sheikh of the Beni Sakk'r, when he saw it, quietly observed, "I shall kill this sheep, and bid the Adwân feast with us to-night. If they do not come, they wish for war; and they shall soon have it." A messenger was accordingly despatched at once, and a second at nightfall. Happily peaceful counsels prevailed, and the old foes feasted together in my honour.

At a great feast, such, *e.g.*, as a wedding, nothing could be more dishonouring than that the place of entertainment should not be filled. Hence in our Lord's parable the summons was sent out into the streets and lanes of the city, and then into the highways and hedges to those who, having no settled home, wanderers and outcasts, could not previously have received an invitation. These would, of course, be provided on entering with an upper garment or white cloak, which would conceal their rags, and enable them to present themselves without humiliation. The provision of an upper garment for each guest is not extinct, but is now

rarely practised. I once only have met with an instance, and that was at a Jewish wedding-feast in Hebron, where the father of the bridegroom, a wealthy man, supplied a cloak to each guest as he passed the threshold. We accepted one, to conceal the peculiarity of our European costume, but the better-dressed friends simply expressed their thanks and passed on.

The kind of feast which best illustrates the imagery of the Virgin in the *Magnificat*, "He hath filled the hungry with good things," is that which is made by a Moslem on his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca. It partakes somewhat of the nature of a thank-offering, and is especially intended for the poor. All the sons of the faithful are summoned. I once saw such a feast given by a Bedâwy sheikh many years ago in the interior of Tunis. A herald arrived at the camp of the tribe by which we had pitched our tents, a day in advance, to announce his master's approach. The women at once began to make provision by preparing *couscous*, a sort of wheaten porridge; and they seemed to be at work all night. The next morning messages of invitation were sent to all the neighbouring camps. Kids and lambs were slaughtered and roasted, or rather baked, in pits with hot ashes covered with a turf; milk was

brought in, honey, and fruits, chiefly dates; and more kids were boiled, and their soup poured over the piles of *couscous* in large, shallow wooden bowls. Before sunset all the guests had arrived. The *hadj*, or "holy man"—for such he was considered to be, after completing his journey to the birth-place and to the tomb of Mohammed—sat on a carpet in front of his tent, and each visitor did obeisance, some even kissing his cloak. The cripples, the blind, and the infirm were then led in, and set in the place of honour, followed by the others. They sat in small circles round the great bowls of food, which they despatched with their fingers, really gorging themselves; and when they could eat no more, were supplied with handfuls of dates and fresh cheese to carry away. We, being unbelievers, of course were not admitted, but a kid was sent to our tent afterwards. In an ordinary entertainment the place of honour would be reserved for the most distinguished; the dishes would be passed on from them to those of lower rank, then to the retainers near the door, and finally to the beggars outside the tent, who would throw the bones and refuse to the dogs sitting patiently beyond them.

The teaching of the rabbis respecting hospitality is thus set forth in the Talmud: "Let thy house

be wide open. How so? This is to teach that a man's house should be wide open towards the south and the east and the west and the north, even as Job made four doors to his house, in order that the poor might not have the trouble of going round it. If one came from the north, he entered straight in; if one came from the south, he did likewise, and so from the other quarters. It was for this reason that Job had four doors made to his house. And let the poor be members of thy household, that they may talk of what they ate and drank in thy house, as the poor spake of the house of Job. When that great affliction came upon him, he said before the Holy One, 'Have I eaten my morsel by myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof?' For all that, the Holy One said unto Job, 'Job, thou hast not half come up to the standard of Abraham; thou sittest and waitest within thy house till the strangers come to thee, but Abraham sat in his tent door, and looked out, and caused the strangers to turn in'" (*Aboth d' Rabbi Nathan*, chap. vii.). This passage is a good illustration of the method of rabbinical commentators, and of the fanciful word-splitting teaching by which they made the word of God of none effect through their tradition

V

MARRIAGE AND BURIAL CUSTOMS

V

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AMONG all Oriental peoples marriages have always been occasions of much ceremony, as well as of unbounded feasting. But, excepting among Christians, there is no trace of any religious ceremonial in connection with them. The Talmud gives very minute directions as to the observances at a wedding among the ancient Jews. The bride was to be in the first place conducted from her father's house to that of her future husband by her virgin friends or bridesmaids, as we see in the parable of the Ten Virgins. She was to be veiled, but her hair was to hang loose, and her head to be uncovered, in token that she was not yet in the power of a husband. Every one who happened to meet the procession, even though a royal personage, was to give place to it. Before her was to be carried a cup of wine, and corn was to be scattered among the children on the way, as a token of fruitfulness. The attendant virgins were to dance

and sing as they escorted the bride, their refrain being, "She needs no paint, no henna, no plaiting of the hair, nor any such thing, for she is of herself most beautiful." When she reached the threshold of the bridegroom, a crown was placed on the heads of each, reminding us of the custom still retained by the bride at Norwegian weddings. Then came the feast, which was continued every evening for seven days, the sexes being entertained apart. Two stewards called *shosbenim* were appointed, the one for the bride, the other for the bridegroom. "The master of the feast," spoken of in the marriage at Cana of Galilee, was probably one of these. Marriages were forbidden to be celebrated at the feasts of the Passover, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles, because, says the Talmud, "there are great rejoicings at nuptials, and they must not intermingle one joy with another"—*i.e.*, sacred gladness with secular merriment. We see the character and amusements of the seven days' feast in the account of Samson's wedding (Judges xiv.).

A traveller in India thus describes an incident at a Hindoo marriage, which illustrates the widespread similarity of Eastern customs: "All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands, to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their

lights, and were unprepared ; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward." The ceremonies of marriage among the ancient Greeks, though not among the Romans, were very similar to those of the Jews : the same torchlight procession of the bride and her maids to the bridegroom's house, and the same general feasting of the sexes apart for seven days. But, contrary to the Jewish practice, the Greeks always inaugurated the marriage by solemn sacrifices and invocation of their gods.

The Moslem marriage customs do not differ materially from those of the ancient Jews. Marriage among them is regarded solely as a business matter. A love match, or even one originated by the parties themselves, is very rare. But such instances do occur. One came under my own observation. My friend Sheikh Zadam, of the Beni Sakk'r, twenty years ago the most renowned warrior in the region south of Damascus, received a message from the daughter of the Sheikh of the Adwân, whom he had often worsted, that, though she knew he already had three wives, she would be glad to be the fourth wife of so noble a man. The offer was promptly accepted. But when the lady's brother requested that he in return might marry Zadam's sister, he re-

ceived the haughty reply that, though a Beni Sakk'r might ennoble an Adwân, an Adwân should not degrade a Beni Sakk'r. An Arab father regards his daughters much as he would his sheep or cattle, selling them for a greater or less price, according to his rank and fortune and their beauty. Even now a daughter can speak of her father as Leah and Rachel did of Laban: "Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us and hath quite devoured also our money" (Gen. xxxi. 15). The dower paid to the father by the bridegroom usually varies among ordinary people, just above the fellahin, from £15 to £25 of our money; and, of course, more if the bridegroom's father be rich. There are also heiresses and widows who have property in their own right. These cannot be divorced unless the husband refund to them the full sum they brought him.

Betrothal invariably precedes actual marriage, sometimes by several years, as children of tender age are not unfrequently affianced in order to cement or strengthen an alliance between two families. The arrangement is for the advantage of the bride's father, who expects annually to receive presents from the family of the bridegroom. There is a betrothal feast given to all friends on both sides, on a scale almost as liberal as the

wedding festivities. The Christians add to the betrothal ceremonies a gift carried in a large handkerchief or shawl by the bridegroom and his friends, containing twenty piastres, several bottles of brandy, dried fruit, coffee, sugar and tobacco, as a legal token that the affianced husband of the bride now undertakes the duty of maintaining her. Also every Easter he must send her a sheep, with some coins round its neck, and a handkerchief in which four candles are wrapped. Gifts are also sent by the Mohammedans to their betrothed at their great festivals. Hence the father of a betrothed girl is often in no hurry to part with her, as he meanwhile has the additional profit of her labour. When the time arrives for the completion of the marriage, the religious ceremonial among the Christians resembles our own, only that it takes place at night, the bridegroom and his party going first to the church, and there waiting to receive the bride's procession, as has been already described. After the nuptial blessing by the priest, and the singing of hymns, the processions re-form, and march by torchlight to the bridegroom's house, the male portion leading the way. Among all religious sects, the feast lasts for seven days, and each guest is expected to contribute a few piastres towards the expenses.

I have been several times a guest at a Moslem wedding, though I never saw the bride. The guests sit on the floor of the room or hall, which is quite open on one side to the courtyard. One large shallow wooden bowl is brought in after another, round which the visitors squat in separate groups. Of course there is here no wine or brandy, but coffee. As soon as the dishes are cleared, the attendants go round with a towel on one arm, and pour a little water on the hands of each visitor, and hand him the towel. Then while pipes are lighted, the entertainment, which lasts far into the night, is supplied by the professional story-tellers, who recount exaggerated visions of *Arabian Nights'* tales, or sonorously drone forth staves of Arabic poetry.

Burial customs in the East have changed as little as marriage customs. Every incident or allusion in Holy Scripture may be illustrated by what we see to-day. Interments always take place at latest on the evening of the day of death, and frequently at night, if the deceased have lived till after sunset. There are, and can be, no elaborate preparations. The corpse is dressed in such clothes as were worn in life, and stretched on a bier, with a cloth thrown over it. The breath has scarcely left the body when the professional

mourners appear. These are the old women and gossips of the village or neighbourhood, who seem to be always in waiting, and need no summons. Of this class were the mourners who were weeping and bewailing the daughter of Jairus, when our Lord at once put them all out, *i.e.*, all except the nearest relations and His attendant disciples, all the hired mourners who had been raising the wail, *alalai*, and bewailing, *i.e.*, literally, "beating their breasts on account of her," and who to this day weep, howl, beat their breast, and tear the hair, according to contract. Our Lord could not tolerate these simulated agonies, which are as repugnant to holy solemn feeling, as an ostentatious pompous funeral among ourselves.

The traditions of the scribes required in every case these adjuncts, which have come down to our own times. Thus the Talmud enjoins, "The husband is bound to bury his dead wife, and to make lamentations and mourning for her, according to the custom of all countries. And also the very poorest among the Israelites will not allow her less than two pipes and one mourning woman ; but if he be rich, let all things be done according to his quality." The Jews divided this professional mourning into two kinds: the *animoth*, which was an incessant wail till the body was carried out on the evening of the

day of death; and the *ebloth*, or ordinary mourning, which lasted at intervals, with regular visits to the grave, for thirty days. (Thus Mary went to the grave of Lazarus to weep there.) While the body lay in the house, none of the family might eat or drink there, and they were to omit the prayers and all other observances of the law. All these superstitious regulations our Lord repudiates in the case of Jairus's daughter; and when He commands to give her meat, He sets the seal to the change from the house of mourning to the house of health.

In the case of Ananias, we read that the young men "wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him." "Wound him up" is better translated in R.V. "wrapped him round"; *i.e.*, they unfastened his girdle, and then taking the loose under-garment and the wide cloak which was worn above it, used them as a winding-sheet in which to cover the corpse from head to foot. It must be remembered that the Jews had not then, any more than the modern Oriental, tight-fitting clothes like ours, but shirt, cassock, and cloak were all loose, and only held together by the girdle round the waist. Ordinarily, in preparing for burial, the women, whose special duty it was, would provide a cere-cloth, and before wrapping the body in it sprinkle spices in the folds, as in the case of our

Lord's burial, to check decomposition in some slight degree. They then dressed the deceased in his best outer garments, and laid him on the bier—a simple, flat board, borne on two or three staves, by which the bearers carried it to the tomb. In the earliest period of the Jewish nation, it was the custom, as also among the Greeks, for the nearest relatives of the deceased to have what was held to be the privilege of performing the last office of closing the eyes, laying out and washing the corpse, clothing it with the best robes worn in life, and then bearing it to the tomb ; but in later times these offices were performed by a band of young and able men attached to each synagogue, who held themselves in readiness to perform any menial duties required about the place, as the arrangement of the furniture, the cleaning of the building, and the like, among which the burial of the dead was included. These were called "the servants of the synagogue" ; and their services, being connected with religious worship, were held honourable. A similar organisation exists in many Roman Catholic countries in Europe, though confined simply to the performing of burial rites. It is looked upon as an honourable function, though, as belonging to a secret society, its members are not known, and when thus employed wear masks or veils to pre-

vent recognition. Some commentators have suggested that the young men who carried Ananias to his burial belonged to an order of sub-deacons in the Jerusalem Church; but it can scarcely be supposed that the infant community had by this time arrived at such a pitch of organisation. It is enough that the younger and capable members present undertook the duty that would naturally fall to them.

The mode of conducting a burial has not changed among either Jews or Mohammedans. I have frequently been present at funerals of both. There is no religious service, nor does there appear to have been any of old. The male friends and neighbours precede the corpse, which is clad in the holiday apparel of former life, and if a Moslem, with the turban placed at the head of the bier, as a soldier's sword is carried on the coffin among ourselves without further covering. The bier is carried, not on the shoulders, but about a foot from the ground, by handles. Among the Maronites and other Christians, I have seen the bier borne aloft on the upstretched and reversed palms of a crowd of bearers, who rapidly relieve one another in quick succession. We were told that this was to symbolise Christ's triumph over death. There is no ceremony or funeral service at the grave, but

a loud and deafening din of wailing. The Mohammedans yell forth incessantly the first verse of the Koran. The sombre clothing, the sign of mourning in the West, is unknown. But the whole population attends. Generally I have seen the women preceding the bier, led by the professional mourning women. They fling up their arms, tear their hair, with the wildest gesticulations of grief, and shriek forth the name of the deceased, with lamentation that God has taken him. There is indeed "a tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly." Behind the bier follow the men and boys in a confused crowd, often taking up the refrain of the women in front. After the body has been laid in the grave, the wailing is renewed for a short time, and then all disperse. All creeds now bury in graves like ours, but very shallow. The body is let down, the bier withdrawn, and over the grave is always heaped a pile of large stones to protect it from the hyænas and jackals, which, in spite of these precautions, frequently burrow and feed on the bodies.

There are distinct Moslem, Jewish, and Christian cemeteries; but I am not aware of any trace, except among the Druse nobility, of the family or private sepulchre. As we know, all among the ancient Israelites who possessed any land,

or who could afford it, had their own family tombs, hewn out of the soft rock in the hillside, each sepulchre containing many *kokim*, *i.e.*, *loculi* or niches, in one of which the body was placed. Many generations of a family could thus be placed in one of these tombs, which are found in countless numbers throughout the country. The family might have lost their estate, but never their ancestral tomb; for in selling land no Jew could dispose of the burying-place, to the use of which his descendants were entitled for all time. A similar law has always prevailed in China, where it is held to be a capital offence to disturb a tomb, however ancient. As Chinese graves have for centuries been dropped down anywhere over the whole country, this law has proved, especially in the north, an insurmountable plea against the construction of railways.

For weeks, even for months, the women, not the men, regularly visit the tomb and weep over it, the professional mourners being also paid for this service by the rich. All these customs have come down unchanged from Bible times. The cemeteries, too, are often unchanged. Thus at Nain the approach to the place is from the north-east, the Tiberias road, by which our Lord would travel; and on this road, a little distance from what once

were walls, is the burying-place still used by the Moslems, with a few whitened sepulchres, and many oblong piles of stones, marking the humbler graves. This, from the situation, must have been the ancient cemetery; and there is no trace of any other. One touching incident of a visit to Nain I would mention here. Just outside the ruins of the wall is an ancient fountain or well, to which the water is conducted by a conduit from the hills, and to which we descended by a few steps. While we were examining it, there was an Arab girl standing by, who had just been filling her pitcher. We asked her for a drink. Unlike the woman of Samaria, she set down her tall water jar, and readily gave it. On our offering her a small present, she declined it. Tears filled her eyes, and she said she did not give it for money, she would take no backshêsh, but she gave it to the strangers for the memory of her mother, who had lately died and been buried over there (pointing to the cemetery), for charity, and for the love of God. In vain we pressed it. Who could not but feel a touch of sympathy? The poor single-hearted girl kissed our hands, and we passed on.

Besides the heaping of stones on ordinary graves for protection, cairns are often used to mark a sepulchre, but with varying significations. A heap

of stones is invariably found at the point where the pilgrim first catches a glimpse of some hallowed spot. On the road from Engedi to Petra, on the crest where the first view of Mount Hor is obtained, is a conspicuous cairn. Each journeyer reverently places a stone, kneels with his forehead to the ground, and thanks Mohammed that he has cast eyes on the tomb of Haroun (Aaron). A second class of cairn marks the sepulchre of some great or holy man. This is distinguished by an upright staff on the top of the heap, to which are often attached certain offerings, in the shape of pieces of cloth or white rags, emblematic of mourning. The third class of cairn is very different in its signification. We read that when Absalom fled from the battle-field of Mahanaim, and was ignominiously slain by Joab, his body was flung into a pit hard by in the distant forest of Gilead, and they "laid a very great heap of stones upon him." The victorious soldiery heaped stones, with every mark of contumely, upon his carcase. Every passer-by would pick up a stone and add it to the cairn, accompanying the act with a curse on the son who had lifted up his spear against his father. The custom remains to the present day. Every track in the wilder parts of the country is marked by occasional cairns, to which every Arab as he

passes contributes, and as he hurls his stone, curses the memory of the murderer. There is no staff or fragment of rag here. The pile tells where some robber or criminal has met his end. The heap is not high, but very wide. There is one such remarkable cairn south-east of Rabbath Ammon, to mark with opprobrium the memory of a parricide of the Adwân tribe, tradition says not how long ago. There still stands in the vale of Kedron, just below the Temple area, a sumptuous tomb hewn out of the rock, and well known to all visitors to Jerusalem as Absalom's tomb. The Jews believe that it is the monument built in the king's vale by Absalom in his lifetime for his own sepulchre. By its architecture we know that it is many centuries later than his time, and, from the Ionic pilasters round its base, cannot be earlier than the Syro-Greek period. But the Jews hold the tradition, and stones are piled against its side, cast by each passing Israelite as he invokes a curse on the rebellious son.

Though there is little in the burial customs of Jew or Moslem to accentuate the belief in the resurrection of the body, yet that faith is held most strongly and definitely by both. We see it equally in the Jews of old. In the Jewish Prayer-book among the eighteen benedictions, which, we

have every reason to believe, were in use long before the time of our Lord, is the following: "Thou, O Lord, art mighty for ever; Thou quickenest the dead: Thou art strong to save; Thou sustainest the living by Thy mercy: Thou quickenest the dead by Thy great compassion; Thou makest good Thy faithfulness to them that sleep in the dust; Thou art faithful to quicken the dead. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who quickenest the dead." Such benedictions show how strongly the belief in a future life and a resurrection to come was impressed on the Jewish mind, even though it may not occupy a prominent place in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The faith of the Moslems in a resurrection and a future life, which shall be a continuation of our present existence, however debased and corrupted in its definitions—carnalised, if we may so say—can only have been derived from the teaching of the Jews in Arabia; for no such conception can be found in the earlier and degraded idolatries of that country. Mohammed's knowledge of Christianity seems to have come through a Jewish medium. In the creeds of the more civilised nations of the East, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was universally and instinctively accepted. Belief in the resurrection of the

body can in most cases, if not in all, be directly traced to revelation. Nor must we confuse the simple teaching of the resurrection of the body and its reunion with the soul, as looked for by the pious Jews, with the vague and mystical idea of the future life in the body as held by the Egyptians. These embalmed and preserved their dead, not so much that they might be ready at the resurrection to receive the disembodied spirit, but because they believed that every man had two spiritual existences, one of which went to the world of spirits, and the other wandered homeless on earth, unless it had the body or an imitation of it—a sculptured likeness of the deceased, of which we find countless examples in the Egyptian tombs —in which to take refuge. It is true they believed that the dead would hereafter live again in the body, but this was only to be after ages spent in other transmigrations. Equally strange to the purer faith of the Zoroastrians was the idea of the quickening of the body.

VI

PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL LIFE

VI

PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL LIFE

FEW phases of everyday life have afforded psalmist, prophet, and our blessed Lord Himself richer illustrations of spiritual things than the pastoral life of the open country of Palestine. From the incidents of a shepherd's calling is derived some of the most picturesque imagery of David's psalms. The calling of a lonely shepherd-boy might not at first sight appear to be that most adapted to educate the warrior and future ruler of men, though it might evoke the poetic genius. Yet it proved to be God's school to fit the youth for his high destiny. Very different is the shepherd's life in the East from the prosaic task of the sheep-farmer of Western lands.

Bethlehem stands on the shoulder of a hill which descends abruptly into a rich, unfenced, even plain, stretching eastwards. In that plain each villager has his plot, indicated by the well-known stones placed here and there—the neighbour's landmark.

Beyond this tillage land, where Boaz had his reapers, and where Ruth the Moabitess gleaned, a walk of two miles brings us to the pasture land on the hilly fringe of the wilderness of Judæa, where David valiantly watched his father's sheep, and where, a thousand years later, the shepherds of Bethlehem received the angelic message of the Messiah's birth. The wide, flat valley soon breaks out into white stony slopes on either side. After the cornfields end, the whole is treated as common land, where the flocks of the villagers pasture together. It is called a wilderness ; but by wilderness is meant, not a desert, but the grassy downs and shrub-clad hillsides which are to be found, in a state of nature, not far from every village. Wherever the land ceases to be fitted for corn cultivation the common land of the village begins, and extends to the common of the next little community, carefully delimited also by landmarks, or "marches," as they used to be called in England. The "neighbour's landmark" applies not only to these, but also to the corn-patches which, unlike the gardens and vineyards, are for the most part unfenced, but are always marked out by stones set up at the corners and various intervals, indicating the boundaries of each private property ; for the arable land, unlike the pasture, is never held in

common. A shepherd's life here is well calculated to bring out courage and self-reliance. Not only wild animals, but marauders from the East, have to be guarded against. The Bedawee of to-day is the exact counterpart of the Amalekite and the Edomite of the time of David. The hillsides on either side the valley break out into various little nullahs or wadys, which form a puzzling labyrinth for the stranger, and a convenient lurking-place for the wolf, the jackal, and the thief. In the days of David, the hills, now so bare, were largely covered with forest, the evidence of which still remains in the decayed roots among the cliffs, and from the cover of which the bear would steal out to attack the flocks ; while the lion, extinct since the date of the Crusades, lurked in the open, among the rocks.

We can only fully grasp the force of the metaphors of Psalm xxiii. when we think of the deep solitudes in which the Eastern shepherd feeds his flocks. We drive them ; we make them do the shepherd's bidding by the command of his dog ; we leave them securely in the field by night. In the East the dogs protect, but never drive the flocks ; there the shepherd goes before them, and they follow him, come to his call, and crowd round him for safety if danger threatens. Then there is perpetual danger from sudden torrents, from

wolves, and robbers ; there are but rare and scanty streams, and the flocks often suffer from parching thirst. The shepherd never leaves them. When night approaches, they follow him to some safe fold, to some cave in the hillside. Surrounded by his vigilant dogs, the guardian, "keeping watch over his flock by night," makes his bed in front of the cave, which is shallow, and protected by a rude stone wall, with a narrow entrance. The shepherds' sleeping-place—used sometimes by a single guard, but more generally by a party of from three to six, or eight—is formed by an oblong circle of stones. This remains from year to year ; and inside is a pile of twigs and brushwood, to protect the tenants from damp, on the top of which is spread straw or rushes for warmth. Here they lie, surrounded by their dogs. These watchful guardians are ever on the alert, and wake the echoes of the night as they detect the prowling wolf, or hear the howling of the jackals on their search for some hapless stray sheep. In front of such a cave the shepherds were keeping watch when the heavenly host accosted them, and roused them to leave their charge for a time, that they might be the first to do homage to the infant Saviour. The habits of the shepherds of Bethlehem are still unchanged—a sturdy, resolute set of men ; and we

may see to-day their humble *douars*, and the stone circles in front of many a hillside cave.

Besides this cave-fold, there is another kind used in the more level country, alluded to in our Lord's parable of the lost sheep,—an open enclosure, with a wall of sufficient height to prevent the wolves and jackals from clearing it, and surmounted with branches of thorny shrubs piled up for further security. One such fold serves for a considerable district. As the sun descends, the shepherds may be seen converging from all quarters towards the fold, each followed by his charge in two separate parallel columns: the sheep, ringstraked, speckled, and white, in one, the black goats in another. The flocks are carefully told and counted as they stream in, when the door is fastened, and guarded all night by the porter, or keeper of the fold.

More dangerous than the wild animals is the thief, the wild Bedawee, who esteems sheep-lifting an honourable calling, and who, if his camp is within accessible distance, is always on the watch to plunder the peace-loving *fellaheen*, or countrymen. The shepherds are astir with the morning dawn. The first voice that is recognised evokes a universal bleating. Each calls in turn, and his own sheep stream forth and welcome him, looking

up in his face with their plaintive bleat. Rarely, except in the case of some adventurous kid, is there any confusion. The shepherd calls each member of his flock very rapidly; for all have their names, often given from some flower or fruit, and know them, or at least distinguish their own keeper's voice. When he has satisfied himself that none are missing, he starts forth, always armed with a long stick, and his sheep and goats follow him in file, the dogs bringing up the rear. All are eager to get to their pasture, and seldom linger by the way. If they do, a sharp cry from the shepherd speedily recalls them. On him they depend for their pasture, and this is continually changing; for the hillsides and uncultivated plains, common lands belonging to the village, are shared by all, so that no one can retain the best pasturage day after day. The shepherd looks out on the hillside for the scanty patches of green herbage, and calls up the flock to graze on them. I once watched a shepherd playing with his flock. He pretended to run away; the sheep pursued and surrounded him. Then to climb to the rocks; the goats ran after him;—and finally all the flock formed a circle, gambolling round him. "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." But "a stranger will they not follow."

Let any passing traveller try, as I have often done, to imitate the shepherd's voice. At once the sheep will pause, toss up their heads, and then scamper off to huddle close to their guardian, so completely do they realize their dependence on him. He has even now sometimes to use his weapons in defence of his flock. A band of marauding Bedaween will still, on occasion, pounce on an isolated flock ; but as the sheep cannot be made to travel fast, a courageous man may often summon his neighbours and rescue the booty. But the more frequent danger is from the wolf, at least in South Judæa ; for, unlike the jackal, it will not hesitate to attack the flock by day.

I remember once meeting in the southern wilderness a shepherd-boy weeping bitterly, as his little flock of half a dozen followed him. Asked his trouble, he told us that awolf had just sprung on a lamb and carried it off, for he was not strong enough to drive him away. "Ah," said our dragoman, anxious to improve the occasion, "you should have been brave, like David; for just here he killed a lion and a bear, and he was only a boy ; but then, David was a Christian!" The shepherd in the East is generally the owner, or the son of the owner, of the flock ; or, if it be the property of some rich man or village sheikh, he is paid, not by day's

wages, but by a fixed proportion of the produce—*i.e.*, of the lambs, the wool, and the cheese. Like Jacob when he served with Laban, he has his share of the flock, though I have never heard of the payment being arranged so that he should claim all the speckled or spotted. If the former, he would certainly now have the larger share, for the greater part of the flocks are speckled or pied. The "hireling" is the man who happens to be hired for fixed wages, merely for the day, and has no further interest in the flock, nor cares to risk his skin in its defence against thief or wolf.

In the phrase "He leadeth me beside the still waters," I take the reference to be, not to the waters themselves, but to the flocks resting quiet and undisturbed for a while round the well, after their midday draught. Though sheep with us rarely drink, yet in those hot and dry climates they require to be watered as regularly as cattle or horses. Not only does the shepherd lead his flock to water; he carries the young lambs which are too tender to keep up with the rest. I have often seen a shepherd carrying a lamb under each arm, and two or three more in the hood of his *a'beih* or cloak. If the abundant imagery of Scripture, taken from pastoral life, contains so many allusions foreign to what we see in the tending of flocks in

our own country, how much more difficult must the allusions be to those who know nothing of flocks! I felt this last year when, addressing through an interpreter a large congregation of native Christians one Sunday in Ceylon, I unfortunately chose the subject of the Good Shepherd. My interpreter told me afterwards that not one of my hearers had ever seen a sheep, or knew what it was. "How then," I asked, "did you explain what I said?" "Oh," he replied, "I turned it into a buffalo that had lost its calf, and went into a jungle to find it."

With all his care, the shepherd may easily lose a sheep. As soon as the flocks, which have left their fold at daybreak, reach their pasture ground, they generally separate, the goats hurrying up the hillsides to browse in long lines on the shrubby herbage; the sheep moving in a parallel line lower down, and nibbling at the finer grasses. The shepherd posts himself on some rock or mound, where he may keep the whole in view, and from time to time moves forward, calling on the flocks to follow him, which they always do with alacrity. But at such a juncture some adventurous animal may have strayed out of hearing, and thus, bewildered at finding itself alone, may wander farther and farther from its companions, helpless

and defenceless. When evening approaches, the shepherd reckons up his flock as they pass before him into the fold, and at once detects his loss, and retraces his steps till he haply finds the wanderer.

The shepherd's life seems a somewhat monotonous one, for summer and winter make little difference in his daily cares. His great time of festivity is the sheep-shearing, to this day the real harvest-time of the Arab, and his pastoral neighbours,—the wool-harvest. Despising agriculture as beneath the consideration of a freeman (or shall we say—a freebooter?), his cornfields, if he have any,—and in Moab he has many,—are left to the *fellaheen* or villagers to cultivate for him. But in the *Negeb*, or south hill country of Judah, there can never have been much tillage, while it is still unrivalled as pasture land. It was the wilderness of Carmel of Judah. In the early spring, as the custom still is, the flocks and herds were driven from the neighbourhood of the village into the southern uplands, where the Bedaween camps may still be seen any day; and the shepherds of Nabal soon claimed the protection, as neighbours, of the band of outlaws and freebooters under David, who made their headquarters in this district. With the natural chivalry of Arabs to their

friends, David's men were "a wall to them both by night and day," and "not a hoof was missing." At the beginning of summer, when forage began to fail, the sheep with their young lambs returned to the village, sheep-shearing commenced, and as soon as it was over a general feasting and revelry was kept up for several days. The Arab tribes still make sheep-shearing the great festival of the year. Lambs and kids are slain and roasted night after night, and soured milk, *leben*, and new cheese are supplied without stint, not only to the labourers, but to all the neighbours and to any passing strangers. To this substantial food, liquor much stronger than coffee is often added, in spite of the Moslem prohibition of intoxicants; for the Arabs, unlike the townsmen, are not rigid in this matter, so long as the potation is not the fruit of the grape. Happily such sad results as followed Nabal's carouse rarely occur. Mohammedanism, though it has blunted the moral sense, and struck at the root of domestic purity, has preserved its votaries from that drunkenness which is the curse of Christendom.

The relationship between Arab tribes and the settled inhabitants in regard to their flocks and herds was once illustrated to me in a very agreeable way, when I had to do with a veritable

Nabal and a Bedawee David. Travelling in Moab in the month of February, our whole party were taken prisoners by the chief of Kerak (Kir-Moab), and confined by him in the famous crusading castle. We were on our way to visit a powerful tribe, the Beni Sakk'r, whose sheikh was an old friend of mine, with whom I had travelled in previous years. Having heard of our detention, he suddenly one day appeared most unexpectedly, with only two mounted companions, and announced his intention of leaving with us next morning. Our captor demurred, and told him he must have a ransom. The sheikh, with a calmness unlike David, quietly observed, "You men of Kerak have hundreds of camels with their young, and thousands of sheep with their lambs, out on our plains. The Beni Sakk'r have been a wall to them all these months, and now you ask ransom for my brothers! Nay, my friends; but if we return not within two days, your camels and goats will travel farther, even to our camp, and I shall weep for the losses of you, my friends, but my people will not make them good." I scarcely need to add that the argument was found unanswerable, and that we set off the next morning.

Passing from pastoral life to agricultural, there are, as in the days of old, three principal in-

gatherings of the fruits of the earth—the corn harvest, the vintage, and olive gathering. These fall successively at different periods of the year. Three kinds of grain are cultivated—wheat, barley, and spelt; the second being the most largely grown, especially on the poorer and drier soils. Maize is also planted, but in small quantities. This is, of course, a modern introduction. Spelt (Hebrew, *cussemeth*), translated "rye" in A.V., is very like wheat, but with a coarse sheath and long beard. It is hardier and has a heavier yield than wheat. It is still cultivated, but not largely. Rye and oats are more northern cereals, not raised in Palestine, where a greater breadth of barley than of any other grain is grown.

The seedtime depends much on the date of the "former" or winter rains. If these are early, the ground is at once scratched with the shallow, wooden plough, which has come down without change or improvement from the earliest times, as may be seen by the representations of it on the Egyptian monuments, identical with the present implements. It consists simply of a flat-bottomed wooden share, pointed at the end, without any earth-board. To the hinder extremity of the share is fastened a long pole sloping forwards, to the other end of which is attached the yoke, a cross-

bar which rests on the shoulders of the oxen which draw it, with two wooden collars into which their necks are thrust. Another shorter staff, inserted in the share in front of the socket of the pole, but sloping backwards, serves as a handle to guide the plough. Oxen are still used almost exclusively for ploughing, asses rarely, and horses never. This implement merely scratches the soil. After it has passed over it, the seed is thrown in by hand from a basket, and covered in by a rude brush harrow. The seedtime is sometimes as early as the beginning of November ; but when the rains are late, I have known the barley to be sown about Christmas-time. The wheat is sown immediately afterwards, but there is an interval of three weeks or a month between the two harvests.

Both harvests are epochs in the agricultural calendar of the country, and frequently alluded to in Scripture. The barley harvest was about the time of the Passover. Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem "in the beginning of barley harvest." In the plague of hail the barley was smitten, but the wheat and spelt escaped, "for they were not grown up" (Exod. ix. 31, 32). The barley harvest may be said to be generally in April, but in the Jordan valley in March, and under Hermon as late as May. I have eaten bread at Jericho at the end

of March made from the crop of the year sown in December. Barley is not only the universal food of horses and asses, and sometimes also of draught oxen, but it forms the staple of the bread of the very poorest, though those who can afford it mix it with wheaten meal. In the remoter parts of the country we frequently could get nothing but barley cakes, and found this food much inferior in nutritive qualities to wheat. We can see in Scripture in what low esteem barley bread was held by the jealousy offering being of barley meal, whereas in all other cases it was wheaten. So in Ezekiel the bread of defilement was barley: and "handful of barley" is spoken contemptuously. The proud Arab to-day calls the Syrian *fellah*, the tiller of the soil, "a barley cake"; reminding us of the dream of the Midianite in Judges vii. 13, 14, when he dreamt that a cake of barley-bread—*i.e.*, a mere Israelite husbandman—fell into the camp and overturned a tent.

The wheat harvest is generally a month later than the barley, and is over before the end of May. Thirtyfold the seed is considered a good return, as well it may be, where the rotation of crops and the application of manure are entirely neglected. Our Lord, in the parable of the sower, speaks of a yield of a hundredfold in good ground. And under

favourable circumstances this would be no excessive produce. The variety known as mummy wheat, described in Pharaoh's dream, though still cultivated in Egypt, I have never seen in Palestine.

When Samuel withdraws from his office to make way for the king whom God had permitted Israel to have, he invokes a phenomenon which was accepted at once as an evidence of the sanction of Jehovah to His prophet's last words of warning. The sign is a thunderstorm in the midst of wheat harvest. In our northern and more variable climate a thunderstorm in harvest would certainly be no prodigy; in England it is the very season of thunderstorms. Not so on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. From April to October rain very rarely falls, and the season of thunderstorms is from December to February. Throughout the summer the sky is cloudless. This is owing to the uniformity of the wind. It is only the west winds that bring clouds, and these winds usually prevail from October to April. The east wind, which comes from the desert, hot, dry, and parching, seldom lasts long. During summer the winds generally blow up or down the valleys and the coasts either from the north or the south,—more generally the latter,—and are never charged with moisture. But a sudden breeze from the west

brings up the clouds ; and these, when they meet the heated atmosphere over the parched soil, soon become surcharged with electricity, and burst into a thunderstorm. During four summer seasons in Syria, I once only encountered such a shower ; and this was under Lebanon, when the wind, suddenly shifting from north to south, brought up for an hour the moisture from the Mediterranean, and dispersed it over the land with a few thunderclaps.

The wheat is reaped with a sickle, shaped much like those in universal use among ourselves a generation back, and is generally threshed at once, the heads being struck off the straw by the sickle on to the threshing-floor. This floor is generally common to the whole village, the surface of the rock being levelled, or, failing this, an artificial floor of mortar is laid down. The grain is separated from the chaff either by cattle treading it as they are driven round and round the floor, or by a heavy wooden wheel or roller, or thirdly, by a flail. It was this last method which Gideon was using when called by the angel to lead his people against Midian. See also Isa. xxviii. 37. After the threshing comes the winnowing, which is performed as of old, in a most inartistic fashion. So soon as the straw has been removed, the corn is

tossed into the air by shovels, when the light breeze, which is needful for this operation, carries off the chaff as the wheat falls back. In the absence of wind a great flapper or "fan" is employed. "Whose fan is in His hand." The grain is thus tossed several times, and finally passed through a sieve. The refuse of the sieve is still, like the gleanings of the field, the perquisite of the poor. Therefore Amos reproaches the avarice of those who "sell the refuse of the wheat."

When winnowed and sifted, the wheat is now universally stored in *silos* or underground pits, hollow chambers, about eight feet deep, carefully cemented on the inside, so as to be impervious to damp, and with a circular opening or mouth, about fifteen inches in diameter, just large enough to admit the passage of a man, which is boarded over, and then, if needful for concealment, covered with earth or turf. In such receptacles the corn will remain sound for several years. These *silos* abound in all parts of the country, and are probably, in some cases certainly, the identical storehouses used by the Jews, who first constructed them. They are frequently close to an old winepress, where has been the homestead of some Israelite farmer. That many are of that age is certain from the fact that there are many in the southern wilderness of

Judæa, where no corn is grown, in places which have been desolate ruins for centuries. Such storehouses are alluded to by Jeremiah (chap. xli. 8): "Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey." Owing to the insecure state of the country, these storehouses are generally made under the most retired portion of the dwelling-house, the women's apartments. This custom is alluded to in 2 Sam. iv. 6: "They came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat." And so again: "They came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon" (chap. xvii. 18, 19); where "the well" is is probably the dry well, or storehouse under the woman's chamber. In the Arab *douars*, or permanent villages, the *silos* for the barley are in the village square: for wheat and other more valuable commodities, under the wattled chamber.

The hand-mill for grinding the corn is precisely the same as that used in ancient Egypt and Israel, the lower stone slightly convex, the upper, with a hole in the centre, through which the corn is poured, concave, generally made of black lava.

A handle was inserted near the rim of the upper millstone, worked by two women sitting face to face, and each holding the handle, working it after the fashion of two men at a cross cut saw. Ancient broken millstones are frequently found among the *débris* of old cities. The corn was ground as required for baking. Larger mills were worked by asses. The hand-mill is still employed and worked by the women in the remote parts of the country, and by the Bedaween ; but in Western Palestine water-mills are now commonly used, having been introduced probably by the Saracens or the Crusaders. We know historically that they were largely used by the latter. With this single exception, there is not one detail of the operations of agriculture, from the ploughing to the grinding of the corn, in which there has been the least change or advance since the days of Joshua.

VII

AGRICULTURAL LIFE (CONTINUED)

VII

AGRICULTURAL LIFE (CONTINUED)

A VISIT to the plain of Gennesaret is a vivid commentary on the parable of the sower. We arrived there, on one occasion, just at the beginning of the year. It is only about three miles in extent, enclosed north and south by ranges of steep hills and westward by a mighty basaltic dyke, once a stream of molten rock, which has poured down and encroached on the plain. The whole is strewn with huge black blocks and stones of smaller size, which have become detached, and, either through earthquakes or other causes, have been scattered over the surface of the lower ground. The plain is, and probably always was, unfenced; and at this time, freshly ploughed in its whole extent, it was simply one level dark-brown expanse, with no tree to relieve the monotony, which was broken only by narrow lines of green oleanders, overshadowing the three rivulets which intersect it. Footpaths, fresh trodden on the ploughed fallow, scored it in

all directions. The ploughing and the rude brush-harrowing being completed, the sower was beginning to sow. He had literally come forth to sow; for he came from the village of Irbid, several miles off, on the hills to the south. His basket of seed slung under his left arm, with steady measured pace he marched up and down his portion of the open field, jerking his handful of corn before him at each step. Two narrow paths intersected his corn-patch. These necessarily received their share of seed, where it did not long remain; for a few jackdaws and some little flocks of larks and buntings followed the sower, and speedily swept the pathways clean. The seed on the rich light soil was soon brushed in by a lad, with a bunch of twigs used as a rake. But much of this must come to nought. We spoke above of the rocks and stones with which the plain is strewn. Most of these boulders have sunk into the black earth, but only far enough to be covered with a sprinkling of soil by the harrow. At present all the surface is moist, and the seed will germinate, soon to be burned up by the scorching sun, like grass on the housetop. Every here and there we may see small stalks protruding. They are the stumps of the most noxious weed of Gennesaret, a sort of astragalus (*Astragalus christianus*), with its roots

penetrating, as we found by experiment, several feet deep, and which the *fellaheen* are too indolent to dig up and extirpate, contenting themselves with chopping down the year's growth with their mattocks. Close alongside of these boulders and rock clumps are patches of the richest soil the earth produces, consisting of decomposed basalt from the stones which strew the surface. In good seasons, when there has been abundant "latter rain," a hundredfold is not an unusual crop in this fertile nook. We were here witnessing, even to its minutest details, the scene that was before the eyes of our Lord and His hearers as He sat in the bows of a fishing-boat drawn up close to shore in front of the plain.

I have returned in early spring to find the black winter mantle of Gennesaret transformed into a brilliant green carpet, spangled with flowers of every hue, scarlet and pink predominating: anemone, ranunculus, iris, ipomea, and gladiolus. Here and there were brown burned patches, where on the rock was no depth of earth, and still more frequently the tough young shoots of the astragalus thorn, casting their long pinnate leaves over the tender blade of young corn, which they soon will strangle. The oleanders, in long sinuous lines by the shore and the little streams (the "willows by

the watercourses"), were simply clad in a mantle of pink, and in the early morning were resonant with the music of song-birds, while the call-notes of quail and francolin echoed from every corn-patch. It was a lovely picture of the lavish beauty of nature, and of the bounty of nature's God. Again, I have returned in the end of May, when the reapers were beginning to ply the sickle. The shallow rock-patches were hardly observable; the prickly weeds and giant thistles had asserted their claim to nearly one-third of the surface, but the crop elsewhere was rich and abundant, and may well have yielded its hundredfold.

It is not in Gennesaret alone that thorns are the enemies of the husbandman. Thorns and prickly plants abound in the dry climate of rocky Palestine. No less than eighteen Hebrew words are used in the Old Testament to express different kinds of thorns, briars, and thistles, many of which cannot be satisfactorily identified. One may see the women in the plain of Jezreel in summer gathering the thistles and spiny acanthus, and binding them in great bundles for fuel for their ovens. This use of thorns is alluded to in Eccles. vii. 6: "As the crackling of thorns under a pot." But there are woody thorns, notably the *zukkum*, and the *nubk* tree, of the twigs of which tradition

would plait our Saviour's crown of thorns, which are far too hard and sharp to be so gathered, and which cannot be handled with impunity. To such thorns David compares sons of Belial, *i.e.*, men of nought, who shall be "as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place" (2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7). So powerful and sharp are their recurved and hooked spines that the husbandman who has sown a patch of corn in the open prairie needs no other fence than the boughs of these bushes lopped off and strewn in a line round the crop "with iron and the staff of a spear," or, as we should say, with a long fork. Though the rude hedge is not more than three feet high, it is quite impervious, and no animal, not even a camel, will think of forcing such a defence. But these thorns are of no further use, precious as fuel is in those treeless lands; and when the crop has been reaped, the fence must be cleared away, that the cattle may browse on the herbage which takes its place. The husbandman pushes the thorns together with his mattock, and kindles them on the spot.

Next in importance to the harvest was the vintage, for though the culture of the vine has

shrunk to insignificance in most parts of Palestine, owing to the prohibition of the use of wine by the Mussulmans, we have abundant evidence of its former extended cultivation, in the winepresses and the stone ridges which are found in all parts of the land, even where the vine is now unknown. Where there is a considerable Jewish or Christian population, as about Hebron, in Benjamin, or under Hermon and Lebanon, it is still cultivated extensively, and wine manufactured exactly as of old.

Our Lord's parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen is full of minute touches beautifully illustrative of the vinicultural methods of the East, methods which remain unchanged to this day. Four operations are spoken of in the formation of a vineyard: planting, hedging it, making a winepress, and building a tower. Care and labour are bestowed on planting, such as are expended on no other crop. The vine is not cultivated on rich plains or in the lowlands, but invariably on the hillsides, and generally with a southern aspect. The vine loves rocks and stones, and in the rich soil mingled with these, it extends its roots to a great depth and distance for moisture. Consequently the land must be thoroughly cleansed, all brushwood and other roots carefully extirpated, for the vine brooks no competitor in the soil.

Another part of the preparatory operation is mentioned by Isaiah in the parallel parable (chap. v.). He "gathered out the stones thereof." The hillsides are always thickly strewn with loose stones, which in that climate are of the greatest use in preserving the moisture from evaporation under the sun's rays. But the larger stones in every vineyard are always gathered and heaped in long ridges at regular intervals, so as to give at a distance the appearance of long parallel stone walls, which have crumbled through neglect. In the neighbourhood of Rasheya and Hasbeya, under Hermon, these stone ridges may be seen, covered in the season with vines. When the vineyards have perished and the land has lain desolate for centuries, these ridges remain, attesting its ancient fertility.

Nowhere is this more striking than in the deserted *Negeb*, or south country, near Kadesh-barnea, where the vine has long ceased to exist. It is especially interesting to find the proof of its ancient culture here, because it is very near the camp of Israel when they halted so long at Kadesh-barnea, and its neighbourhood explains the facility with which the spies could have carried for so short a distance the specimen bunch of the grapes of Eshcol, probably grown on these very

hills. I have found on the eastern downs of Moab similar rows, extending for miles, and still bearing the name of "the way of the vineyards" among the Arabs of the district, who have never seen a vine in their lives. The use of these ridges, over which the boughs are trailed, is to keep the bunches of grapes from the damp ground when ripening, and to aid the ripening process by the reflected heat from the stones.

The next process in preparing a vineyard is, "He set a hedge about it." With the exception of the gardens close to the villages, the vineyards are the only enclosed plots, the cornfields and oliveyards being always open, and the former, save when surrounded by cut thorns on the plains, only protected from trespass by the vigilance of the herdsmen.

Next, he "digged a winefat," or, as Isaiah expresses it, "hewed"; for the winefat, or winepress, was always in the vineyard itself, as the ripe grapes would not without loss bear carriage to any distance. So numerous are these winepresses, that in the course of one day's exploration on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel I discovered eleven of them. They are very simple in structure, but unless destroyed by man's hand, will remain while the world stands. A flat or gently

sloping rock is selected. At the upper end, a trough is cut into the rock about three feet deep at the lower part, and four and a half by three and a half feet in length and breadth. Out of the same rock, and parallel to this trough, is cut out below it a shallower vat, about a foot in thickness of the native rock being left between the two. This segment of rock is perforated by two or three holes bored close to the bottom of the upper vat, so that when the grapes were pressed in the upper the juice streamed into the lower vat, from which it was drawn off through another hole.

The last operation is the building of a tower. This was not done invariably. In many of the smaller vineyards, and especially when near the village, the owner was content with "a booth that the keeper maketh"—a sort of wickerwork erection of boughs, with an upper storey, where the keeper could sit and guard the ripening crops from intruders, whether human or other, and especially from the jackals at night, "the little foxes that spoil the vines." This erection only lasted for the season, and perished in the winter. Such are still in use, and I have often seen the ragged remains of such shelters among the hills of Benjamin. But in many cases we may still find the ruins of the solidly built tower which commanded

a view of the whole enclosure, and was probably the permanent residence of the keeper through the summer and autumn.

Our Lord more than once refers to the pruning of the vine. This is an important part of viniculture. No plant requires such severe pruning. We may see this in the vineyards of France and Germany. Every year the whole of the young wood is cut back to the stump; and a vineyard in spring shows nothing but a number of shapeless, gnarled, and distorted stocks, which are often, as we are assured, three hundred years old, for the possible age of the vine has never been ascertained, and the best wine is considered to be produced from the most ancient plants. The same system is, in its general outline, pursued in the East, only that the main trunk is allowed generally to grow to the length of six or eight feet, and then the branches are trained laterally, or else, as on Hermon to-day, and in ancient times in what is now desolate Eshcol, the boughs are trailed on long ridges of stones, to keep the fruit from the damp earth. Even when the vines are trellised, as they often are on houses or in gardens in Lebanon, each leader is unsparingly stripped of every twig or shoot before the spring comes round. The cuttings are then thrown to the goats, who greedily

nibble off the bark, and they are then collected in the vineyard and burned. No better use can be made of the vine-wood; it is absolutely worthless (Ezek. xv.). It is soft and yielding. "Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work, or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?" "Is it meet for any work?" It will not even make a tent-peg.

The vitality of the vine, its power of throwing out vigorous branches after every pruning for successive centuries without any renewing of the plant, is the fact that gives point to the prophecy of Isaiah, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." The chapters are here unfortunately divided, and we shall lose the force of the expression unless we read it along with the preceding paragraphs. The prophet has just been speaking of the fall of the mighty trees of Lebanon. These trees, which symbolise Assyria, are to be cut down. They are cedars, the grandest of all the daughters of the forest. But the cedar, when once cut down, never springs up again. It belongs to the *coniferæ*, the cone-bearing family, including all the pines and firs; and none of these (with the exception of one or two species, as the Canary Island pine, unknown in Europe or Asia) are capable of send-

ing up shoots when once they have been hewn down to the ground. Hence "to cut down like a cedar" signifies to destroy without hope of resurrection. The illustration was familiar to the ancients, for Herodotus tells the story that Crœsus, King of Lydia, threatened the men of Lampsacus that he would destroy them like a pine tree unless they released Miltiades; and that the threat perplexed them till they were reminded that a pine once cut down never springs up again.

No plants can offer a greater contrast in appearance and treatment than the cedar and the vine—the vine, low and inconspicuous, unlike the towering cedar, scarcely lifting itself above the ground, dependent upon external support to rise at all. But its whole value depends upon its being systematically cut back, "pruned that it may bear more fruit." It throws out vigorous branches for successive centuries without any renewing of the plant. Thus from the vine plant of Jesse, now by captivity cut down to the very root, a branch shall spring. The word is not that usually translated "branch," but has a special force, נֵצֶר meaning a brilliant or shining bough, as though to imply that it surpasses all others in beauty, while the passage is more exactly rendered in R.V., "A branch out of his roots shall bear fruit." However low the house of

David may have fallen, it shall spring up again in the Messiah, while the mighty Assyrian, great as the cedar, shall perish utterly.

The mode in which tenancy is regulated in the case of vineyards is alluded to in our Lord's parable of the husbandmen and the vineyard. There were, and still are, three modes of dealing with land. According to one of these, *arisuth*, the tenants are supplied with the seed, and also with money to pay the labourers employed at the times of planting and ingathering, while they receive a certain portion of the produce, generally a third in the case of corn, a fourth in that of vineyards and other permanent crops. If a new vineyard were so let out, the husbandman paid nothing for the first four years—*i.e.*, until the vines came into full bearing. The second mode is that the tenant, as with us, pays a fixed money rent. But this is an unusual arrangement, except in the case of gardens. The third, and the most ordinary system in the East to this day, is that the tenant agrees to give the landowner a fixed proportion, generally one-half of the produce, whether the harvest be good or bad. In such cases the owner only provides fences, wine and oil presses, and what we should term "fixtures" on the estate. It is to this kind of lease that the parable of the

husbandmen refers when in due time the lord sent his servants to receive of the fruits of the vineyard.

This kind of tenancy, where the farmer pays in kind, and not in money, still prevails in many parts of Europe. It is the ordinary mode in France, and is there called the *metayer* system, as the produce is divided equally between landowner and cultivator. The system existed in England for about sixty years at the end of the fourteenth century, and in the case of tithes up to fifty years agone. The Romans were in the habit of restoring the lands of conquered nations on condition of receiving half the produce; and all the Crown lands of the Turks in Palestine and Syria—and these include a large portion of the country—are farmed on the same system. When the husbandmen propose to kill the heir, they are represented as relying upon the custom of the East: "The inheritance shall be ours." If an owner is not to be found, and the occupier pays the taxes to Government for six years, the latter is looked on as the proprietor. The owner in this case was in a far country; he had sent servant after servant, and had not avenged their cruel treatment. The husbandmen had hoped in time to secure a title to the vineyard, but the appearance of the legal heir made them fear for their tenure. By killing him,

as his father seemed unlikely to appear, the vineyard would become absolutely their own.

The vintage was the second, or, if we consider the gathering of the summer fruits and vegetables, which followed the wheat harvest after an interval of a month, to be entitled to be reckoned as one of the ingatherings, the third harvest-time of the year. It has now lost its ancient importance, but the process may still be seen wherever the vine is cultivated. The vintage commences in the warmer valleys in September, and in the north it is not finished till the end of October. As the sowing of the corn in favourable seasons begins in November, the force of the utterance of Amos predicting the time of plenty is explained, "The ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed" (chap. ix. 13). The bunches of grapes are carefully carried by women to the wine-press and thrown in. The juice which, pressed out by the simple weight of the grapes, oozes first into the lower vat, is collected first, and produces the richest and best wine, "the sweet wine," as the "drop port" is reserved in the vintage of Portugal, and is highly esteemed. The treading is effected both by men and women standing barefooted in the vats and leaping as they hold each other's hands, accompanying their action with popular

catches or rather shouts. Of course in leaping upon the grapes their clothes are splashed with the juice (Gen. xlix. 11). The reason for thus pressing out the wine is that anything harder than the bare human foot might crush the skin and even the stones of the grapes, and the skin and bruised seeds would give a bitter and astringent flavour, and destroy the value of the wine. The fermentation begins in the vats, and then the liquor is poured into goatskin bottles, still exclusively used for this purpose, and, finally, when the fermentation is almost complete, sealed up with pitch in *new* skins.

With the gathering of the olives, which immediately follows the vintage, the cycle of the agricultural operations of the year is completed. The olive is one of the most important items in the food of the people. While the expressed oil takes the place of butter with us, as well as of candles, the slightly salted ripe olives, which will keep fresh for months, form along with bread the staple diet of the poorer classes. "A land of oil olive and honey" was prominent among the blessings of the land of promise. And still the olive tree is abundant; it is the one characteristic tree of the country. The most extensive olive groves are on the Phœnician and Philistian plains, and especially

to the north of Gaza. They stud all the valleys from Benjamin to the plain of Jezreel (Esdraelon). The vale of Shechem is one noble olive grove. They form the riches of Bethlehem, and cover the lower slopes of the valleys round Hebron. The olive is certainly not to our eyes a picturesque tree; but to the Oriental the coolness of its pale blue foliage, its evergreen freshness, spread like a silver sea along the slopes of the hills, speak of peace and plenty, food and gladness. The trunk, too, gnarled and wrinkled, often hollow and scathed, yet yielding abundant crops in the extremest old age, and renewing itself from the inside, suggests the idea of perpetual youth.

The most celebrated olive trees are those, well known to all travellers, in the garden of Gethsemane. Though centuries old, they cannot possibly be the same trees which existed in the time of our Lord, as Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, destroyed every vestige of a tree on Olivet. Still they may well be the lineal descendants of the then existing trees, and may have seen Crusader and Saracen. The olive, like the yew, has the power of renewing its youth by forming new wood within its hollow and decayed trunk, growing, as it were, from the circumference to the centre. When we speak of the *garden* of Gethsemane, we must not picture an

Eastern garden as neatly laid out with paths and flower-beds. It is simply an enclosed plot with olive, fig, and other fruit trees, affording shade, the first requisite of a garden according to Oriental ideas, with fragrant shrubs, and perhaps a few patches of iris and narcissus (the rose of Sharon). But there will always be a secluded and shaded corner, sheltered generally by trellis-work, with a seat for rest and quiet meditation.

The gathering of the olives is a very simple operation, the boys and women climbing into the trees, and beating and shaking the branches. "Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree" (Isa. xvii. 6). "When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the fatherless, for the stranger, and for the widow" (Deut. xxiv. 20). The Moslems strictly follow the Jewish law in this, and after the owners have left the tree, the gleaners are entitled to follow; and the poorest contrive by industry to gather enough to supply them relish for their bread, or even oil for their winter lamp. One oilfat or olive press at the entrance of a village suffices for all. The oil presses, with their gutters, troughs, and cisterns, were often cut out of the solid rock, and many still remain by the deserted ruins of the old cities of Judah, attesting the

ancient fertility and population of the region. The press is simply a circular stone trough, in which the fruit is placed, and the oil expressed by a massive stone wheel, worked by a wooden screw and vice; and the produce of oil is enormous. A single tree will yield ten to fifteen gallons. The olive-yards are not fenced, and the property is generally not in the soil, but in the trees, each having its own owner, and single trees being bought and sold. So many olive trees is a common dower for a daughter.

The fig, though the most abundant of fruits, is not usually cultivated as a sole or principal crop, but is planted in all the corners of vineyards and in any irregular piece of ground. Being highly prized for its shade, it is often planted by the corner of a house. "To sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree" gave the fullest idea of peace and security. There is no protection against the rays of an Eastern sun more complete than the dense foliage of the fig tree. It is indigenous, and found in every part of the country. Isaiah (chap. xxviii. 4) says of the drunkards of Ephraim that they "shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer," or more accurately in R.V., "as the first ripe fig before the summer, which when he that looketh upon it seeth,

while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up," *i.e.* which is easily seen and is at once gathered and eaten by the passer-by. The illustration is taken from a peculiarity in the fig tree which I have observed in warm climates. In very hot and sheltered regions, as by the shores of the Dead Sea, the fig is an evergreen. But it is not so in most districts of the Holy Land; and when it is deciduous, the fruit buds push out before the leaves. Moreover, there is great individual variation in the time at which the fig trees put forth their fruit and leaves, some beginning to show foliage in April, others not till May or later; but those trees which come last into leaf often have a few small figs ripe before the leaf has opened, known as the June figs. They drop from the branch by a touch, and are considered a delicacy, though really much inferior to the main crop. The "glorious beauty" of the drunkards of Ephraim should vanish, the prophet implies, as completely as the early ripe figs disappear when gathered by the passing wayfarer.

Thus this passage casts an explanatory sidelight on the incident of our Lord cursing the barren fig tree. He saw a fig tree in the way—which was therefore common to all comers,—and found nothing thereon but leaves only. This happened about the end of March or the beginning of

April—a time of year when it would be most unusual for a fig tree on Mount Olivet to be in leaf, although I have seen such occasionally in the neighbourhood; but as the tree exhibited its precocity by having leaves so early, it certainly might be expected to have fruit, for the fruit generally appears before the leaves. The traveller had a right to expect that the tree which had abnormally early leaves would also have abnormally early fruit. The lesson in this case was that those who professed to be first should be last; for they had only the rustling leaves of a religious profession, the ostentatious display of the law, and vain exuberance of words, without the fruit of good works.

VIII

EASTERN COSTUME

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THERE is no reason to believe that the fashion of dress in the East has in any way changed since Biblical times, the representations on monuments exactly corresponding to the raiment in present use. Where there are differences in the ordinary and plebeian costumes—*e.g.*, of Egypt and Chaldæa—we shall find a parallel difference in the modern dress. In Palestine, the universal and indispensable garments were two : first, the *chetoneth*, whence the Greek χιτῶν, the inner vest or shirt, rather unfortunately rendered in our version "coat." This was a long, loose garment, generally without sleeves, and reaching to the knees or ankles. It was retained at night, and any one having no other clothing is spoken of as naked. Over this during the day was worn the *me'il*, rendered "cloak" in our version, answering to our coat, which had loose sleeves, and was longer than the shirt. No one appeared abroad or outside his

house without his *me'il*, which was only thrown off when engaged in hard manual labour, as by fishermen. This was usually, especially when travelling, fastened round the waist by a girdle, the folds of which were used as pockets for carrying small articles. It was, and is, sometimes woven in one piece, and is doubtless the vesture mentioned in the history of the Passion of our blessed Lord on which the soldiers cast lots, as it could not be divided without destroying its value. The *me'il* was always used at night as a blanket, thrown over the sleeper; hence the command in the law of Moses that the (outer) garment taken in pledge was to be restored to the owner in the evening, for he did not require it while working in the day, but needed it as a covering at night. When our Lord says, "If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat" (*χιτῶν*), "let him have thy cloak" (*ἱμάτιον*) "also"—though the words are reversed in the parallel passage in St. Luke—He refers, not to private wrong or assault, but to oppression inflicted under legal forms. The rabbis explained that the reason of Moses's injunction was because on the fringe or border of this outer garment was worked the blue stripe which was to put them in mind of the law. But they allowed the other clothing of the debtor to be taken. Our

Lord's teaching, on the contrary, was that they should submit to legal oppression, even if it exceeded the limits of the rabbinical gloss, and included the outer as well as the inner garment. Christ mentions this among other particulars of the law of retaliation, as being most markedly in contrast with the Gospel law of humility, patience, and self-denial.

Over the ordinary clothing a large cloth cloak called *beged* was often worn, and answered to the modern *ab'eih* used by all travellers. There was, lastly, the woollen or linen wrapper, which formed the head-dress or turban, translated "hat" in Daniel, where the three in the fire are spoken of as bound in their hats. The articles of clothing worn by the sacred Victim at the Crucifixion were probably five: the inner vest, coat, girdle, turban, and cloak, for the second of which the four soldiers drew lots, while each of the four secured another article besides.

Referring to the expression in Daniel, "their coats, their hosen, and their hats," the exact articles of dress signified by these names have long perplexed commentators, for the words are not Hebrew, but Assyrian. But modern research has thrown clear light on the meaning of the terms. Herodotus describes the Babylonians as

wearing a long under-garment or shirt of linen, which reached to the feet. Over this they wore a woollen gown or tunic, shorter than the other, and a short hood or cape over their head and shoulders. This description is exactly borne out by the sculptures on the monuments, while the inscriptions themselves have restored to us the Assyrian or Zend words. "Coats" are the long under-garment; "hosen" is the cape that was thrown over the head and shoulders for protection from the sun, and bound round the head with a fillet, exactly as to this day the Bedawee or Syrian wears the *kefieh* of silken or woollen stuff and fastens it round his head with a camel's-hair cord.

It will have been seen that the Oriental dress, whether it be the under or the outer garments, is always loose; *i.e.*, no part of the dress fits closely to the body. Hence a girdle is always worn, though, when at rest or not employed in active work, it is loosened, and hangs slackly on the person. The Syrians are very fond of bright colours in their girdles; and we may constantly see a man, when he prepares to walk or to load his camel, rapidly untwine the long red band of many folds from his waist, and then, after gathering up his tunic, wind the girdle tightly round it, or very frequently wind himself into the girdle,

while his companion holds one end of it tightly stretched. The metaphor, though not the fashion, of the dress, has come to ourselves from the East, as when we speak of any one girding himself to a task. The girdle, as mentioned above, is often used as a depository for small articles, as papers, etc., in its folds. But for more bulky articles, inasmuch as the Oriental loose dress has no pockets, the undergarment is often pulled up so that its folds fall over the girdle, and these loose folds are used as a depository for bread, figs, corn, fruit, and the like. Thus the expression, "taking a serpent into the bosom," means placing it in the dress as a man would carry his food.

The quality of garments varies as widely in the East as among ourselves. In Biblical times cotton, though in use from the earliest period in India, does not appear to have been known except in Persia. It is mentioned once in Esther (chap. i. 6), where our versions render *carpas* by "green," but rightly in the margin "cotton." The Hebrew name has been incorporated both in Greek and Latin as *κάρπασος*, *carbasus*, cotton. We have no proof that cotton was known in Egypt before Alexander's conquests. It has not been found in the swathings of the early mummies, though frequent enough in later times. Now it is largely

cultivated in Palestine. It is doubtful if silk, now one of the most important products of the Lebanon, were known before the Greek period, though Solomon most probably imported the manufactured article. The word *meshi*, rendered "silk" in our version in Ezekiel (xvi. 10, 13), is questioned, but as it appears to mean "drawn out," it may fairly be so rendered. As "Sinim" (Isa. xlix. 12) is almost certainly China, from which country caravans from the earliest ages traded as far as the west of the Caspian, there is no improbability in silken goods having been known among the scarcest and most precious fabrics. But, with these rare exceptions, wool, camel's hair, and linen were the sole textile materials.

The proverbial expression for sumptuousness of apparel was "purple and fine linen." At the present day, the wealthy among the Jews, as among the Mohammedans, wear for an outer garment a long cloak with sleeves and an undercassock of fine linen or silk, bound with a silken girdle. The "purple" means the outer garment of cloth dyed with Tyrian purple, or, as we should term it, "crimson" or perhaps "scarlet," for it is difficult precisely to identify the hue. What is called a "purple robe" by St. John is termed "scarlet" by St. Matthew. We know that the

most valued "purple" dye was obtained at Tyre from a shell-fish (*Murex trunculus*) found in great abundance on the Syrian coasts. The art of extracting this dye is now lost, but the colour would probably be a deep purplish red. Each animal yielded only a minute drop of this colouring matter. To this day large heaps of these crushed shells are to be seen all round Tyre. One of the bastions of the Roman fortifications has actually been built on one of these kitchen middens, if we may so call them. Wool dyed with this preparation fetched an enormous price, and the cloth woven from it was used as the insignia of royalty or high rank among all the nations of antiquity, and a purple or crimson garment is still in the East a royal gift. But the same word is applied to the dye obtained from the cochineal insect, which is still cultivated in Syria for the sake of the colouring matter procured from the dried body of the female insect, the name of which in Arabic is *kirmiz* or *kermez*, from which our word "crimson" is derived. As is well known, cochineal is of a rich crimson colour; and therefore it is probable that the purple of the ancients was really what we term crimson.

"Fine linen"—*byssus*—was the finest product of Egyptian flax, bleached to a dazzling whiteness,

and was so costly that we read of its being sold for its weight in gold. It was gradually superseded by the introduction of silk, which, however, it equalled in softness. Of this material was made the long inner garment or shirt of the most wealthy and luxurious. The shirt of the richer Arab sheikhs of the present day I have often noticed in North Arabia to be of rich striped silk.

In the parable, "the best robe" is brought out for the returning prodigal, literally "the first robe," the long, loose, and wide upper garment mentioned above, often embroidered, which was worn by the Jews of rank, and in which the Pharisees loved to show themselves, like the long fur-trimmed cloak which the Polish Jews in Palestine still wear on the Sabbath Day and on great festivals only. A still more emphatic sign of the prodigal's restoration from a state of degradation was the investing him with the shoes and the ring. Shoes were worn only by freemen, never by slaves. The giving of the ring was an emblem of restoring him not only to freedom, but to dignity and power. The ring, which in the East is always also a signet or seal, is only worn by men of position or property. It is the symbol of social rank, equivalent to armorial bearings in European countries.

The gift of changes of raiment remains to this day an ordinary form of gifts of honour. The royal gifts of shawls of Cashmere are well known among ourselves. The Persian merchant provides a robe for the guest he entertains, though this is left behind when the feast is over, like the wedding garment in the parable. I was once at a great Jewish feast at Orfa, in Mesopotamia, where in an anteroom was a great pile of light cloaks, one of which was handed to each guest on entering, and was delivered again to the servant on our departure. Xenophon repeatedly mentions the custom of giving changes of raiment among the Persians; and it is even spoken of by Homer.

Besides the robes of ordinary wear and of festive occasions, special vestments from the earliest times have been associated with religious worship. Samuel, "the asked of God," a Levite by birth, was to be a loan to the Lord for His holy tabernacle through his whole life. In token thereof, young as he was, he wore the linen ephod, the simple white linen garment of the priesthood. His is the only recorded instance of the ephod being worn by one not a priest. But it is very probable that others employed about the sanctuary wore it, just as, in imitation of Samuel, the white surplice has ever been worn both in the Eastern and West-

ern Churches of Europe by the boys of the choir. I have seen a similar white shawl-like garment on the shoulders of the boys who assist in the chants in the mosques of Gaza and Damascus, though I know not if this be a general custom. It may have been, however, that the white ephod was worn as typical of the especial purity and holiness required in a Nazarite. But whatever the reason of the ephod, the white garment of Samuel, yearly renewed by a mother's love, aptly typified the white-souled and pure devotion of that long life, the career which began with, and may be shortly epitomised by, the words, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

These vestments were not confined to the worship of Jehovah. We read that Jehu, when he would put down Baal worship, "said to him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal." This vestry can hardly have been attached to the temple, for there would be kept only the vestments for the officiating priests. It rather means the robe-chamber of the royal palace, where, after a custom that still exists in the East, vast quantities of changes of raiment, simple white cloaks, were stored for the use of those whom the king might delight to honour.

This being a very special festival, Jehu, to mark

his zeal in Baal's cause, opens the royal wardrobes to the worshippers. His subsequent precaution in making rigorous search that no worshippers of Jehovah should unobserved have gained admission was exactly in accord with the strong feeling among all the ancients that the presence of an unbeliever was a profanation of the sacred rites. Among the Greeks the uninitiated intruder into the mysteries of Eleusis was punished with death. To the present day the Mohammedans visit with instant death any Jew or Christian who may be discovered in the holy places of Mecca or Medina; and we know how very hazardous it was until quite recently for a Christian to visit the mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, and how it is still impossible to obtain admittance to the sacred enclosure round the cave of Machpelah at Hebron. Every Jew now, when in the synagogue at worship wears the *talith*, a broad white scarf, with blue borders, drawn over his head and falling on his shoulders, always praying with his head covered.

Very different from the costumes we have been illustrating was the dress of the wild Midianite of the desert, the Gileadite, or the dervish of the present day—the dervish, for the wandering dervish of to-day is only a caricature of the great, lonely prophet. Elijah—*i.e.*, "Jehovah is my

God"—"the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced," unheard of before, suddenly starts up in front of Ahab, delivers his short and stern warning. In a moment he has vanished. All the characteristics of the man are in keeping with his birth and early training—a Gileadite. For Gilead, then as now, was a land of nomads. Wild, rough men, half shepherds, half cattle-lifters, they bore to the luxurious and refined Israelite neighbours of Tyre and Sidon pretty much the same relation that the Highlanders of a century and a half ago bore to the inhabitants of the Scottish lowlands. The prophet's dress proclaimed the mountaineer of the Arabian border, exactly the same as is worn to-day; the under-garment bound with a broad leather belt, and over it a loose, coarse cloak of sheepskin, with the wool outside, its dark-brown folds floating in the wind as he hurriedly strode along, with head bare and long black locks covering his neck; for he was a Nazarite. The Moslem prophet-dervish, as different from the *mollah* or dervish of the towns as Elijah from a Levite of Jerusalem, exactly copies this dress and habit. He has no settled home; no man knows his route. I have known one startle an Arab party at a feast by his sudden apparition, ejaculating some verses of the Koran, warning his

listeners against the Giaours, and calling on them to fight for *deen* ("the faith"), and then stalk forth from the awe-stricken company to seek shelter and food from the humblest and poorest, who receive his visit as the highest of honours.

The spreading of their cloaks on the road, so that not even the animal on which a king rode might touch the ground, is an Oriental custom which still survives, and is strictly confined to royal personages or to the very holiest of holy men. We all remember the story of Sir Walter Raleigh spreading his cloak on the ground for Queen Elizabeth to step on. I once saw the brother of the Shah of Persia so received in a Mesopotamian town by his brother's subjects. On another occasion, just before the outbreak which led to the English occupation of Egypt, I saw Arabi Pasha thus honoured as he was riding through the streets of Cairo. Umbrage was taken at this, as shadowing his intention to grasp supreme power; but he allayed suspicion by remarking that the honour was done him while escorting the holy carpet on its way to Mecca, and therefore had only a religious, and not a political, significance. Thus, though peaceful and humble, the last entry of our Lord into Jerusalem was in the eyes of all a royal progress.

Among other peculiarities of dress which have come down for many ages is the wearing of curious patchwork cloaks, or *ab'eihs*, such as was Joseph's coat of many colours. It is not a mark of social distinction, but, if we may so say, of individual vanity. The garment is the ordinary sleeved cloak, but on the back are stitched patches of the brightest coloured cloth, red, blue, and yellow, generally in some bold pattern. It is particularly affected by boys and young men, and is probably, as in Joseph's case, the testimony of parental affection, and perhaps stitched by a mother's hands. Such was the coat "of divers colours of needlework" with which Sisera's mother fondly invested her son in her imagination returning victorious with his trophy. A somewhat similar fashion still exists in Japan, where the gentry of the old school embroider their armorial bearings on the back of their coats; and the poorer classes often cover their whole back with blue and white devices stitched on to their blouses. This embroidery work is alluded to in the description of the excellent wife in Proverbs: "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry" (chap. xxxi. 22).

But there are very scant allusions in Holy Writ to what we call needlework as distinct from embroidery. Of course the loose garments of either

sex afforded very little scope for the sartorial art. Spinning and weaving rather than sewing were the feminine occupations. And at the present day the making up of garments for men and women alike, is the work not of the housewife, but of men. The first direct mention of what we should look on as especially woman's work is in the case of Dorcas, full of good works. It is worthy of note that on this, the first, occasion on which we have any account of a Christian woman, we find her to have been actively employed in good works for others, making coats and garments for the poor, and apparently at the head of a society of widows and others who co-operated with her in her works of love. The practical result of Christianity is thus early manifested. This ideal of the Christian life was not Jewish, for we may search the Talmud in vain for a like illustration of female virtue. The piety of the women of Lydda is indeed there recorded, but it consisted in the regularity and rapidity with which they would attend the temple services and then return home. The highest model of female perfection among the Jews of that period was to be found in strict attention to domestic duties and temple services, in supplying the wants of the husband and children, and in the case of childless widows in continued acts of devotion. It

remained for the Gospel to open out, without any express command or rules, a new field for the service of women in all those noble and self-denying works of love in which they can be fellow-workers with Jesus.

In jewellery and feminine ornamentation, the fashion has passed unchanged down the course of forty centuries and more. The earrings, the necklaces, the bracelets, the armlets, the rings, the anklets, that we read of in the Old Testament or see depicted on the frescoes of Egypt and the sculptures of Assyria, are the same in shape, pattern, and design as the decorations of the Eastern lady of to-day. Many of these ancient pieces of jewellery are to be seen in our museums, and some of the most fashionable types worn in our drawing-rooms, especially in the case of bracelets, are exact copies of Egyptian or Assyrian antiques. The anklet seems to have been rather an Egyptian than an Assyrian fashion, though now anklets are as general in India as in Africa. The Arab women are seldom content with a single pair, but usually have three or four, though generally only of brass, on each leg, that they may jingle and sound as they walk. It is to this fashion that Isaiah alludes when he speaks of "the bravery of their tinkling ornaments" and their "making a

tinkling with their feet" (chap. iii. 16-18). Some of these ornaments, as rings and earrings, were and are worn by men as well as by women; and the sculptures represent the Assyrian nobles as generally distinguished by wearing armlets.

But the most extraordinary among the insignia of rank was the horn, often used metaphorically in the Old Testament. Until comparatively modern times a single horn, generally of silver, fastened over the forehead, was not an uncommon Syrian decoration of great men. The use of the word "horn" to express strength and honour is of very ancient origin, as we find in the expression, "hath raised up a horn of salvation for us." It appears to have arisen from the expression in Exod. xxxiv. 29, "Moses's face shone," or literally "emitted rays," where the Hebrew word *karan*—from *keren*, a horn—means "to shoot forth horns," hence applied to the horn-like rays of light. But it was frequently translated, as in the Latin Vulgate, "put forth horns," and from this absurd translation arose the belief that Moses actually had horns, and, as we know, he is always so depicted in mediæval paintings when bearing the tables of stone, and in Michael Angelo's celebrated statue; and the grotesque error has been too often followed by modern artists. The horn was naturally a

symbol of strength, for in its horns lay the strength of the aurochs, or bison, long since extinct, erroneously rendered "unicorn" in Authorised Version, and which was the strongest and mightiest land animal known to the Israelites. When represented as worn by Moses, horns became naturally also an emblem of honour, and thus of royal power and dignity. One of the daily prayers of the Jews at the present day is, "Soon may the branch, the root of David, spring up, and his horn be excellent." This petition may have been in use before the time of Zacharias, and may have suggested his utterance.

The metaphor was also used among others than the Jews. An Arabic expression speaks of the sun's rays as the horns of a deer. The horn on either side of the head is employed on the coins of Alexander the Great, and of some of his successors, the Seleucid kings of Syria, as well as by the Ptolemies. From his well-known coins is doubtless derived the Arabic epithet of Alexander as "the two-horned king." In the prophetical books of the Old Testament, as well as in the Apocalypse, the horn is frequently used as a metaphor for a king or kingdom, as in the song of Zacharias; *e.g.*, the two horns of Media and Persia, the horn of the king of Grecia, the ten horns or kingdoms, the

horn that had eyes. The fashion now lingers only in the Lebanon, where on gala days the married women of rank wear a silver horn, about a foot long, fixed upright on the head, over which is thrown the veil. I have only once seen the horn worn, though specimens have several times been offered to me for sale by the villagers. In the vision in Hab. iii. 4, "He had horns coming out of His hand," the rendering should be, as in Revised Version, "He had rays coming forth from His hand."

The staff of the prophet was like Moses's rod, the symbol of his office, just as the short sceptre was of royalty, and the long spear, with a tuft of black ostrich feathers, of an Arab sheikh. The staff must not be confused with the shepherd's crook, which has been adopted both in the Eastern and Western Churches as the symbol of the office of a bishop, of a shepherd of Christ's flock. This always terminates in a large hook. The staff of the holy man was long and straight, considerably longer than the stature of a man, as may frequently be seen on Egyptian monuments; and it is still the invariable accompaniment of a dervish or holy man among the Mohammedans, though I am not aware that even in the case of those dervishes who are believed to be gifted with the power of predic-

tion the staff is looked upon as an instrument of divination, as it was among the ancient Egyptians, and as the divining-rod has been among the superstitious even in our own day.

IX

MILITARY SYSTEM: WARS AND SIEGES

IX

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THE revolution in the whole system of modern warfare, consequent on the invention of gunpowder, has not materially affected the general character of Eastern strategy, unless in the exceptional cases in which the large masses of trained soldiery come into collision with the undisciplined levies of the Arab clans. The weapons are in part changed. The bow and arrow are no longer known. The short stock and long barrel of the firelock have supplanted them. The pistol has only partially taken the place of the short dagger. But the spear still remains the favourite weapon of the horseman, and cavalry is the military arm on which the Eastern general places his chief reliance. The right arm of modern warfare, the field artillery, is unknown, excepting in the imperial forces of Turkey and Persia; and it is not of these we have to speak, for our observations extend no further than the tribal wars and petty skirmishes which are chronic through all Western Asia, wherever the

suzerain power is not consolidated by permanent garrisons.

In no respect has strategy been more completely revolutionised than in fortifications and sieges; but in the countries of which we speak fortresses no longer exist, at least none which can be utilised for purposes of modern defence, while crumbling and dismantled castles, magnificent specimens of ancient and mediæval engineering skill, and which, before the invention of cannon, must have been absolutely impregnable, unless by the exhaustion of a blockade, everywhere abound, and illustrate in their every detail the records of the campaigns of Old Testament history. But of the fenced cities of Judah and Israel none remain above ground. Yet to-day in its desolation that land, as we wander over its hills and valleys, tells the story of its past history. Every hill-top, or "tell," as it is called, is crowned with a grass-grown, desolate heap, from which ragged stones protrude or are scattered over its surface. What are these? If we dig into them, we find they are all the ruins of walls which once encompassed the old cities of Israel and Judah, now laid low, even to the ground—"brought even to the dust, and trodden down by the foot of the poor and needy." No less than two thousand two hundred and

seventy names of ancient sites have been recovered and laid down in the maps of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the greater part of them being those of ancient walled towns now laid low. Every place of a dozen houses was then walled, unless in the immediate vicinity of a fortified city. The lone farmhouse, the cottage by the wayside, the secluded hamlet, did not exist.

In the midst of our happy insular security, we can scarcely realize what it must have been to dwell in a land "where the inhabitants of the villages ceased," where men dared not live in isolated houses, nor even in communities unless protected by walls, and bars, and gates. No more vivid picture of peace and security could be presented to the war-harassed Israelite than the triumphant song with which Isaiah commences his twenty-fifth chapter, portraying the time when God's salvation shall take the place of walls and bulwarks; when the gates shall stand open; when man shall go in and out without question; when there shall be no alarm by night or day, but trusting in Jehovah's guard alone, all shall be kept in perfect peace. It was a dream never heretofore realized in the history of the nation, save during the short reign of Solomon, the transient type of the Messianic kingdom of peace.

The earliest wars in which Israel as a people were engaged were those with Amalek, almost immediately on reaching the foot of Sinai after their exodus from Egypt. The Amalekites were an aboriginal nomad race, though perhaps the Horites — *i.e.*, cave-dwellers—of whom recently many traces have been found in the Sinaitic peninsula, preceded them in the possession of the narrow valleys and rocky fastnesses. They wandered with their flocks and herds, in which their wealth exclusively consisted, over the whole of Arabia Petrea, from the Negeb, or south country of Judah, to the Red Sea. Predatory and restless, they were the first to attack Israel on their departure from Egypt. Rephidim, where the struggle took place, was probably the Wady Feiran, near Serbal, where the remains of buildings and cultivation attest the former importance of this the principal inhabited spot of the desert before the total destruction of the timber arrested the rainfall. Here, and in all the country round, the Amalekites have left evidences of their occupation in large, circular walls of stones, rudely heaped together, about four feet high, within which are series of chambers attached to the wall with a large open space in the centre. These are doubtless "the cities of the Amalekites" of the Pen-

tateuch, and are just the kind of rude dwellings which would meet the requirements of a nomad people, who never remained long stationary, but who, being in a state of chronic warfare with their neighbours, needed a safe refuge for their cattle. The incidental reference to them in Deut. xxv. 18 shows them to have been treacherous as well as bloody in their mode of warfare. Without venturing on open attack, they hung on the flanks of the scattered and straggling Israelites, and, with dastardly cowardice, murdered the sick, the helpless, and the weary.

Again and again we find these predatory banditti joining in forays, now with the Moabites (Judg. iii. 13), now with the Midianites (Judg. vi. 3), and rendering the whole southern frontier insecure, till David at Ziklag finally broke their power. They treated Palestine just as the Anizeh and other nomad tribes now ravage from time to time the cultivated districts of Gilead and Moab. Against such foes, regardless of the laws of war even as they then existed, but one course, according to ancient ideas, could be pursued—a war of extermination, such as Saul was commissioned by Samuel to carry out. And lest it might be supposed that it was merely a war of reprisals rather than of justly invoked vengeance, no booty was to be spared ; all was to be destroyed.

This command, widely opposed to all the notions of Oriental warriors, was the strongest evidence that the chastisement was to be regarded as from Jehovah, and not from man; that the king of Israel was simply His instrument in taking vengeance on a race hopelessly steeped in crime, and which had fallen far below the moral standard of even that rude period. Viewed in this light, the sentence against Amalek is, like the destruction of Sodom and the extermination of the Canaanites, in harmony with God's moral government of the world. The later Jews, however, interpreted the lesson after a very different fashion, and our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, reverses the teaching of the scribes, which was as to the Gentiles, "If we have no war with them, it is not lawful to plot their death; but it is forbidden to deliver them from death, if they are in danger of it. For instance, if a Jew sees one of them fallen into the sea, let him by no means lift him out thence. For it is written, Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbour, but this man is not thy neighbour."

On one occasion, and on one only, do we read of Israel venturing to take into the battle-field the special symbol of Jehovah's presence: the ark of God. It was at the fatal battle of Aphek, or

Ebenezer, in the last days of Eli. Sharon and all the maritime plain had long been overrun by the Philistines; but the hill-country of Benjamin, with its labyrinth of little hills and interlacing valleys, presented little to tempt invaders, and afforded a centre and a rallying-place for the oppressed. Even to this day the district is studded with villages, poor indeed, yet populous, rarely visited, and whose existence is little suspected by the crowd of travellers who yearly cross the hill-country from Jerusalem to Galilee. Several Christian villages have contrived in these obscure nooks to maintain their existence for centuries. Here the invaders coming up from the plain were met, but speedily routed the untrained levies of the mountaineers. These were not lacking in courage, and determined to try again the fortune of war. But the Philistines, as was their wont, had brought their idol-gods with them into the battle-field. Would not Israel be successful, if they too had the visible presence of their God, Jehovah, in their midst? Let us bear in mind that this was a period of the darkest ignorance; and no wonder then that Israel had yielded to the influence of surrounding idolaters, and had begun to attach the actual presence of Jehovah to the visible symbol of the ark of the Lord, between the over-

shadowing cherubim of which He was supposed to dwell! His presence must bring victory; and therefore at once messengers are despatched for the ark, which, with its priestly attendants, Hophni and Phinehas, is carried in a few hours across the hills to the camp, with a welcome so that "the earth rang again."

The superstition was a wide-spread one. In every story of ancient warfare we find some sacred symbol borne in the centre of the host, like the tattered and weather-worn colours of some regiment of renown to-day. Sparta and Tegea alike believed that the army in the centre of which were carried the bones of Orestes must be the victor. Still more famous was the Trojan Palladium, the image of the patron goddess of Troy, the possession of which secured the safety of the city, and which was therefore stolen by Ulysses. Athens in like manner believed in immunity from capture while she possessed her Palladium. Indeed, a like belief runs down the pages of history. In the wars of England and Scotland, the holy "Rood" of Scotland was held to be an invincible banner, and as such was borne by the Scottish hosts to England, but captured by Lord Neville at the battle of Durham, it being hung in Durham Cathedral until the commissioners of King Henry VIII. con-

signed the priceless silver plate to the melting-pot. Israel's trust in the ark was all in vain. The nation had to be taught that the presence of the Lord was a spiritual presence, and that He would hide His face even from His own children when they had disobeyed Him. The same evening the news is brought to Shiloh that the tabernacle is to remain desolate, for the ark is taken. The aged priest, who has sat, as an Eastern chieftain would to-day, on a *mastaba*, or stone seat, in the open space just inside the town, waiting to hear the news, is startled by the ringing wail as the messenger of woe rushes up. He bears up to hear of the defeat of the army and the death of his sons; but at the climax—"The ark of God is taken"—he falls heavily from his seat, unable to survive the loss of the symbol of the presence of the Lord.

In all these wars after the conquest the Israelites seem to have made no use of chariots, the arm which then answered to our modern artillery, but which was of little service in Central Palestine, and still less in hilly Judæa, where roads were few, narrow, and steep. The chariots of the Hittites and Syrians were, however, encountered by Joshua in his northern campaign and at the battle of Kadesh, and were a formidable force in the wide plains and level ground of Northern Syria. Jabin,

the king of the northern confederacy, used them to terrorise Israel until the utter discomfiture of Sisera by Barak.

In the poems of Pentaur, the laureate of Rameses II., we are told that the chariots of the Hittites were numberless as the sand, and that three warriors stood in each chariot. Eight subject kings, with two thousand five hundred horses, dashed against the Egyptian host on the banks of the Orontes in six successive charges, but were utterly defeated, after a two days' struggle. This decisive battle between the rival empires resembles in its details, so far as we can gather them, that between the northern Canaanites, led by the Hittites, and Joshua more than a century later. These Hittite chariots are also repeatedly represented in the frescoes on the walls of the great temple of Karnak. But the Israelites never till the time of the monarchy possessed chariots. They were useless in the south, and the northern tribes were too feeble and disorganized to possess such a force. Solomon supplied horses and chariots from Egypt for his tributary kings in Syria, and in the Assyrian sculptures and records the chariots are always represented as the chief force of Syrian armies. On one occasion we are told that Benhadad brought four thousand chariots against Shalmaneser. But

in Israel the plain of Jezreel (now Esdraelon), easily accessible from Damascus, was the only district where chariots could be formidable.

The true strength of the Israelitish troops was in their archers and their spearmen. The tribe of Benjamin was renowned for its bowmen. Archery, or "artillery," as it was called by our old writers, formed the chief missile arm of ancient warfare. The name "artillery" was only gradually transferred to "ordnance," as may be seen by its employment by our translators in 1 Sam. xx. 40, more than two hundred years after the introduction of fire-arms. As the spear, the representative of our bayonet, was the weapon of the stalwart soldiers of Judah, so the bow is repeatedly mentioned as the weapon in the use of which the men of Benjamin excelled. The configuration of their country, a crowded mass of dome-shaped little hills, with a network of the narrowest of valleys intersecting them in all directions, would prevent the employment of compact masses of spearmen in warfare, while admirably suited for the tactics of active light-armed archers. Hence not only the common soldiers, but the highest in rank, as Jonathan, the king's son, continually exercised their prowess with the bow, both with the right hand and the left, and "the bow of Jonathan

turned not back," but unerringly sent the arrow to its mark (2 Sam. I. 20 *seq.*).

Much light has been thrown on merely incidental allusions to the foreign wars of Israel and Judah by the researches of the present generation among the buried ruins and inscriptions of the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates. In fact, we now know far more of the details of most of their campaigns than could possibly have been gathered from the brief allusions in Holy Writ. In the story of Naaman (2 Kings v.) occurs a parenthetical observation: "For by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria." From Syrian history, so far as it is recorded in the books of the Kings, we should find no clue to this allusion to national peril. Syria had recently been victorious over the combined armies of Israel and Judah at Ramoth-gilead. But all is explained by the recently discovered Assyrian monuments. There we find that Asshur-idauni-pal had a few years previously overrun the whole of Northern Syria, then Hittite, and had received the submission of Tyre and Sidon. But, so far as regards Phœnicia and Syria, the conquest was not permanent. As soon as he had retired, Damascus threw off the yoke; and when his son, Shalmaneser II., succeeded him (B.C. 859), Syria paid no tribute.

In the seventh year, and again in the eleventh year, of his reign, Shalmaneser tells us he led his armies against Benhadad of Damascus, and defeated him; but in neither case does he claim to have carried off any trophies, imposed tribute, or received submission. We may therefore safely infer that the Syrian resistance had been successful. These campaigns occurred in the beginning of the reign of Jehoram of Israel; and it is evident that Naaman had been the successful general who repelled the invader, and gave deliverance unto Syria. Surely this illustration well deserves a place among the undesigned coincidences which set forth the historical accuracy of the Old Testament history.

Benhadad's siege of Samaria (2 Kings vi.) is one of the most remarkable military incidents in the Northern Israelitish history. It was long, though far short of the three years which Shalmaneser and the Assyrians spent before they captured it and finally destroyed the kingdom of Israel. Even that was far exceeded by Alexander the Great in his twelve years' siege of Troy, or the twenty-nine years' siege of Ashdod by Psammetichus. Sieges, under the conditions of ancient warfare, were, unless where engines could easily be brought close, simply blockades; and the beleaguered place

would generally hold out to the uttermost, because an indiscriminate slaughter almost always followed either capture or surrender. Very rarely were the lives, of the leading men at least, spared.

Samaria by its position was specially well fitted to resist a long siege. It covered the summit and upper part of a gently swelling, flat-topped hill, round which on all sides is a rather wide plain, perfectly open, and surrounded, except where there is one gap towards the plain of Sharon, by a circle of comparatively lofty hills. Thus the besieger could only march to the assault in full view of the city, from whatever side he advanced; and as he attempted to ascend the slopes below the walls he was exposed to the missiles of the defenders. A surprise was impossible; and the besiegers' camp must have been nearly a mile from the city. Thus, when a sudden panic seized the host of Benhadad, they could fly without attracting the notice of their foes. The miraculous noises which the Syrians heard led them to believe that the armies of Egypt and the Hittites had been engaged by Joram, and were hurrying to raise the siege.

There are in this passing expression two slight touches which forcibly illustrate the minute accuracy of the Scripture narrative, and show that

it could scarcely have been penned by any save a contemporary writer. We mark, first, the words, "the kings of the Egyptians." Everywhere else in the Old Testament the *king* of Egypt is spoken of, the country being under a single ruler. But it happens that this period, that of the twenty-second dynasty, is one on which monuments throw little light. Still the number of royal names which have been recently discovered proves that there were at this time many contemporary princes, either associated as deputies, or ruling as semi-independent sovereigns over the different provinces of Egypt. New light has also been thrown in the last few years on the position and power of the Hittites at the same period. We find that the nation was a great confederacy under a number of petty kings; that its power extended over the whole of Syria north of Damascus and over all the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates north of Assyria. Its capitals were Carchemish, on the Euphrates, and Hamath in Syria, on the Orontes. The Hittites at this very period were the natural allies of Egypt against the growing power of Assyria, which actually did finally crush their nationality by the capture of Carchemish (B.C. 717). From the numerous inscriptions of Nineveh, we now know that at this time the Hit-

tites were a mighty people, spread over the north of Syria from Carchemish, on the Euphrates, to Lebanon, and that they were distinguished among the nations for "their swift chariots, their horses, and their engines of war."

Again and again do the inscriptions speak of their formidable chariots, those chariots with which they fought against Joshua at the battle of Merom, and for which, as mentioned above, Solomon supplied horses to his feudatories, at a fixed price, out of Egypt. All these details of Hittite history have only recently been exhumed. Strangely in the light of subsequent discoveries reads the criticism of a living writer on the account of the siege of Samaria in the book of Kings: "Its unhistorical tone is too manifest to allow of our easy belief in it. No Hittite kings can have compared in power with the king of Judah, the real and near ally who is not named at all. Nor is there a single mark of acquaintance with the contemporaneous history" (Cheyne). It is well to bear in mind what the so-called "higher criticism" has said before it had fresh light from ancient monuments.

What the deliverance of Samaria from Benhadad was in the history of Israel, the deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem from Sennacherib was in the history of Judah: a signal instance of Divine

interposition In the promise to Hezekiah, "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor cast a bank against it" (2 Kings xix. 32), we have three operations of an ancient siege very accurately portrayed. The Nineveh sculptures, depicting the siege of Lachish, exactly explain the method of assault. The final means of capture was the mound raised against the wall of the beleaguered places. For the erection of this the archers were indispensable. While the slaves and labourers of the army were heaping materials for the mound, the archers were continuously employed in shooting at every defender who appeared on the ramparts, galling them with their arrows, and thus protecting their workmen or drawing off the attention of the enemy. The archers, as we see from the Assyrian sculptures, were protected by the shield-men. The shield was a strong wooden oblong frame, as high as a man, covered with leather, resting on the ground, and held by its bearer in front of the archer, who under its protection was not only safe, but was able to take deliberate aim. The mound was made of any materials that came to hand, with a gradual slope upwards, till it almost reached the wall, and was not much inferior to it in height. When com-

pleted, battering-rams were plied from it against the upper part of the wall and the battlements, until a breach was effected.

We cannot wonder that the memory of the marvellous deliverance of Hezekiah long survived, and that the Greek historian Herodotus was told of it two hundred and fifty years afterwards by the Egyptian priests. Their story was that while the Assyrians were sleeping in their camp in the night a vast army of field-mice suddenly came upon them, and gnawed all their bow-strings and quivers, and ate their shield-straps. This was in response to a vision granted by the gods to the Egyptian king. The Egyptian tradition agrees with the Scripture history in this: that there was a promise of deliverance, that it came in the night, that it was outside the ordinary course of nature, that it was silent and secret, that it was not till morning that it was discerned, and that flight immediately ensued.

The recent excavations of Mr. Petrie at Tel-el-Hesy, probably the ancient Lachish, have afforded what may be called a stratified history of the ancient city and its many sieges. Here city has been piled upon city, though it has been desolate for two thousand two hundred years. The latest colonists were Greeks, trading with Egypt, whose

settlement was swept away long before the time of Alexander the Great. Below their structures are numerous evidences of the pre-exilic buildings of the Jewish kings, with a wall thirteen feet thick, which when exposed is shown to have been built or repaired three or four times over—the wall which was breached and taken by Sennacherib, as told on the Nineveh slabs now in the British Museum. Below this, again, is a stratum of ruins of mud and rolled stones, gathered evidently from the bed of the stream below, the shanties of a rude and semi-barbarous age, that of the judges before the building epoch of David and Solomon. Below this, again, are the remains of the earliest city, with an encircling wall of sun-dried brick twenty-eight feet eight inches thick, and still standing twenty-one feet high. Above this wall were quantities of thin black Phœnician pottery, of a kind known to be not later than B.C. 1100. The wall, therefore, must be that of the old Amorite city before the conquest by Joshua, the first authentic memorial found of the old Canaanite population, a silent witness of the strength of those Amorite cities, "great and walled up to heaven."

The mound was employed in besieging fortresses even to the later times of the Roman empire. One very interesting specimen remains intact at

Sebbeh, the ancient Masada, on the south-west edge of the Dead Sea. This fortress was built by Herod the Great on the top of a great, isolated rock, and believed to be impregnable. It was the last stronghold of the most desperate of the Jews after the fall of Jerusalem before the army of Titus. Here they held the Roman forces at bay for months. The rock is absolutely perpendicular on all sides. It rises five hundred and fifty feet from its base, and there is a perennial spring at the west side. Against the west side of this cliff the Romans raised a great sloping mound of masonry without mortar, rising to within a few feet of the top of the walls, and only separated from the fortress by a space of five or six yards. From this they battered the walls, and effected the breach by which they entered, bridging the narrow chasm with planks. The mound and the breached walls, as well as the Roman camp on the east side, remain to this day undisturbed, and as perfect as at the moment when the citadel fell.

The account of the hideous cruelties inflicted on the captured garrison is revolting, though the common practice of Roman conquerors. The Assyrian sculptures reveal what it was at an earlier date. The slaughter of male captives by wholesale was the ordinary rule. When Zedekiah

was taken, only the royal family, the principal priests, the nobles, and the officers of state were put to the sword. The blinding of prisoners, as in Zedekiah's case, was common. In one of the sculptures at Khorsabad, Sargon represents himself in person holding a prisoner by a thong attached to a ring passed through his under-lip. The victim kneels before him, while with a spear he pierces his eyes. Others are held chained, with hooks through their lips, waiting their turn. In other cases the king slays the prisoner with his own spear; in another an executioner flays a captive fastened to the wall. The cruel practice of blinding prisoners especially prevailed in Persia, and is mentioned by the Greek historians. In Turkey it was formerly the custom for the sultan to rid himself of all possible rivals by slaying or blinding all his half-brothers on his accession. In modern Persia the shahs have invariably done this up to the present century, the late Shah being the first who was persuaded to abandon the bloody custom. Zedekiah's life was spared, not in mercy, but by a refinement of cruelty, that the last sight he should witness might be the slaughter of his sons. After this, we are told, he was kept chained to a mill at which he toiled.

X

SOME SOCIAL FASHIONS

X

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AMONG social customs in the East there is nothing more elaborate and important in ordinary intercourse than the etiquette of salutations. These vary according to the rank of the parties; and the mode of salutation of a superior, an equal, an inferior, or a slave, is rigidly defined, and the slightest divergence from established usage is the gravest of offences against the rules of propriety. In most instances the ceremony of kissing has an important place. Thus in approaching a royal personage, as in European courts, the person presented kisses the sovereign's hand. Homage is similarly, though far more abjectly, rendered in the East. Assyrian and Egyptian sculptures and paintings abundantly illustrate this mode of homage. The king, sitting on his throne, is approached by the suppliant, who at the very entrance of the hall of audience prostrates himself and creeps forward, touching the ground with his forehead at

each move, till, if permitted, he lies prone at the king's feet and kisses first his footstool, then his feet, and then the hem of his garment. If the monarch is favourably disposed, he holds out his hand, which is deferentially kissed. This ceremony is still practised at the Court of the Persian shah, and indeed at those of all Asiatic potentates.

There are several allusions in Scripture to this kissing as an act of homage. In Gen. xli. 40, when Pharaoh says to Joseph, "According to thy word shall all my people be ruled," the word rendered "be ruled" is the same as that which in Ps. ii. 12 is rendered "kiss," *i.e.*, "do homage"; in Job xxxi. 27, "My mouth hath kissed my hand" means "has done homage to the sun," the fire-worshippers signifying their adoration by kissing their hand when they first saw the sun rise. So kissing the image of Baal was an act of worship (1 Kings xix. 18), much as Romanists now kiss the Pope's toe or the toe of the bronze image of Jupiter which does duty for St. Peter in the Church of St. Peter's at Rome, to signify his superiority over any temporal sovereign, whose hand is kissed. The monarch sometimes held forth, instead of his hand, his sceptre to be kissed, as Ahasuerus did to Esther. Absalom, on the contrary, hunting after popularity, cast aside all royal dignity and

took those who did homage and kissed them on the cheek—a prototype of the ambitious political schemer of our own day. For a king or a prince thus to condescend was revolting to all Oriental notions, save on the rarest occasions. We read indeed of Nebuchadnezzar "worshipping" Daniel. Instead of the courtier falling prostrate before the king and touching the ground with his forehead as he makes obeisance, Nebuchadnezzar reverses the *rôle*, and falls down before the wise man.

There are other parallel instances in history. Josephus tells us that when Alexander the Great in his march of conquest visited Jerusalem and the Temple, and the high-priest brought out and read to him the prophecies of Daniel, the great soldier-king prostrated himself before the priest, in recognition of the Divine authorship of the prediction.

In like manner, when the young ruler came and kneeled before our Lord and called Him "Good Master," there was a depth of meaning, both in the action and the expression, signifying the recognition of a far higher spiritual authority than was ever claimed by priest or rabbi. It was much more than a conventional form of respect or expression of reverence. For though a rabbi would be respectfully saluted, and perhaps the hem of his garment be kissed, yet no Jew would

kneel to him, as this was an honour given to prophets alone, nor would the epithet "good" be applied to any living man in his presence, though it might be used of the absent, and especially of the dead. It is stated that the expression "good rabbi" or "good man" never once occurs in the Talmud. Clearly, therefore, the young ruler publicly acknowledged in Jesus of Nazareth, if not a Divine Person, yet one inspired by the Spirit of God, and our Lord's subsequent question was intended to elicit a further and more distinct confession of His Divine nature.

Not only is kissing a mark of homage: it is still in the East the salutation of intimate friendship; and as a mark of affection, of respect, of condescension, is much more usual than among ourselves. Ordinary acquaintances touch each other's hand, and then kiss their own, and apply it to their forehead, lips, and breast. Inferiors kiss the back of the hand, or, if above the position of a servant, the palm. Slaves kiss the foot, and so do suppliants deprecating anger, or begging pardon. Kissing the hem of the garment expresses great reverence, and holy men or dervishes are especially so saluted. In the Greek Church, during grand ceremonials, the edge of the robe of the officiating priest is often kissed by the

worshippers. I have seen Russian officers in Moscow kneel down in the mud of the street and kiss the hem of the robe of the priest who was conducting a holy picture in a procession. But the kiss on either cheek is the sign of close intimacy and warm affection among equals. It is the mark, not of gratitude nor of homage, but of unselfish love and esteem. Hence the betrayal by Judas with a kiss intensified the black act of treachery. It is only paralleled by the treacherous assassination of Amasa by Joab, taking him by the beard as if to kiss his cheek, while holding the sword with which he basely stabs him. I remember a sheikh of the Adwân tribe assassinating a rival in a similar manner, professing reconciliation and holding his beard with his left hand to kiss him, while he suddenly stabbed him over the shoulder with a dagger in his right hand. I must, however, add that the murderer was outlawed by his tribe, though perhaps the wildest and least scrupulous of those robber-bands of Midian.

The kiss, though used at first meeting, is not used at parting among ordinary friends and acquaintances. The parting as well as the welcoming salutation of every Jew, as of every Arab at the present day, was "Peace be with

thee!" "With thee be peace!" The assurance of our Lord, "Peace I leave with you, . . . not as the world giveth," had a force and power to the Jewish hearer which at first sight it may not convey to us. The words were daily and hourly uttered in the world, without a thought of their deeper and fuller meaning; but the parting "peace" of Jesus is no empty formula; it is the conveying of a real, permanent gift—the peace of God.

There is much of the national character and of the national needs embodied in these varied forms of greeting. Thus the old Hebrew, exposed to continual attacks on his heritage, and to whom the highest ideal of human happiness was to sit, free from war's alarms, under his own vine and his own fig-tree, never parted from his fellow-Hebrew without wishing him *Shalôm* ("Peace"). The Syrian and Arab of to-day, never sure of reaping his harvest undisturbed by freebooters, or safe from the surprise of a sudden raid upon his flocks and herds, uses the same phrase. The farewell of the light-hearted and joyous Greek, to whom pleasure was all in all, was χαῖρε ("Rejoice; be happy"). The sturdy and conquering Roman, with whom power was everything, took leave of his friend with but one word: *Vale* ("Be of good

health; be strong"). Our cousins the Germans, sturdy, plodding, and peaceful, speed their parting friend with the wish, *Leben sie vohl* ("Live well; be prosperous"). The bright, sanguine, volatile Frenchman waves to his companion as he leaves him the wish *Au revoir* ("To our meeting again"). But all of these—peace, happiness, strength, health, prosperity, our meeting again—are combined in their deepest fulness in the true meaning of our own "Good-bye" ("God be with you").

Dancing.—The nations of the East have ever combined the dance as well as music with their most solemn religious ceremonies. There is nothing frivolous or trifling in the manner in which Orientals strive by the rhythmical movements and gestures of the body to express joy or praise. Just as our music might be divided into sacred, martial, and operatic (including in the latter all lighter melodies), so there are still among the Mohammedans three very distinct classes of dance, corresponding to these three divisions. From the various allusions to the dance in Holy Scripture, we may reasonably believe that their dances, as well as their music, have come down with little change from their Jewish predecessors. Of the third class of dance, performed exclusively by women, we need say nothing. Such was the

dancing of the daughter of Herodias before Herod; such are the exhibitions of the dancing girls of Egypt, or the Nautch girls of India, all of them an abomination to the Lord. In the East the sexes always danced separately, nor was it otherwise when David led the triumphal procession before the Ark. The men preceded with a leaping step, swaying to the sound of the music; then followed the musicians, and after them the damsels dancing by themselves.

I had an opportunity of seeing such a religious dance in 1881, when Arabi Pasha led the procession with the sacred carpet for the Kaaba of Mecca out of Cairo, on its way to the Prophet's shrine. This is one of the greatest ceremonies of Mohammedanism; and the carpet, the gift of the khalif, is renewed only at intervals of several years. It was borne aloft on camels, and surrounded by troops; but in front was a vast crowd of ulemas and dervishes, with the chief muftis at their head, leaping, bounding, swaying their arms, and whirling round in time to the din of drums, trumpets, and cymbals which followed them. The men chanted, or rather yelled, verses of the Koran as they danced, suggesting to one rather the frantic frenzy of the prophets of Baal with Elijah on Carmel, than a religious triumphal procession. The

excitement and the music soon drove many of them into a state of ecstatic rigidity. They seemed lost to the sense of pain, and one and another laid themselves down with stiffened limbs in front of the horses, which walked over their bodies without inflicting any apparent injury. The horses, however, were not shod. The same insensibility to pain and muscular rigidity is exhibited habitually by the dancing dervishes, as all Eastern travellers have seen ; and is the result of physical excitement.

But let it not be supposed that the contortions of the modern dervish are representative of the dancing before the ark of Jehovah, any more than the yells of *Mohammed, Mohammed, rashoul il Allah!* (the prophet of God !), are like the glorious strain, "Let God arise : let His enemies be scattered" ; "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy strength," or the chanting in alternate verses of the heart-stirring twenty-fourth Psalm. The modern is but the parody, by a corrupt and degrading superstition, of the solemn grandeur of the worship of Jehovah. We may not fail to note how David marks the greatness of this occasion, the conducting of the ark of the Lord—the symbol, *i.e.*, of the Divine presence—into the new capital of the kingdom, by laying aside all his

royal robes and wearing the simple white ephod, which was the dress of all who ministered before the Lord, thus placing himself when in God's presence on a level with the humblest Levite. So the modern Jew, by his *tallith*, or white scarf over his head, symbolises the equality of all worshippers in the presence of God.

The posture of worship in the East, whether in synagogue or in mosque, differs much from our custom. It is generally standing or kneeling, as of old among the Jews. Once, and once only, is sitting spoken of as an attitude of adoration, when we read that David "went in and sat before the Lord." We must not confuse this posture with our idea of sitting in a chair, an article of furniture unknown to the Oriental. The throne on which an Eastern prince or chieftain appears before his people is more like an ottoman, on which he sits with his feet tucked up under him. The posture of sitting as David did is still habitually practised by the Mohammedans in their devotions, as well as standing or kneeling. In sitting for adoration, the worshipper kneels on both knees, and then throws himself back, with the weight of his body resting on his heels and his hands spread on his knees. So particular are the Moslems about this attitude that the question as to whether the feet

are to be perpendicular or the toes turned outwards has been a topic of fierce controversy among them. In this posture the prayers or verses of the Koran are recited, and at the end of each sentence the worshipper leans forward and touches the ground with his forehead. Thus David sat before the Lord. He "went in"—that is, to the tent or tabernacle in which the Ark was sheltered—to commune with the Lord. I have seen a similar attitude adopted by Buddhist priests in Japan as they sat in a semi-circle on the sacrarium, or elevated daïs of the temple, facing the central image of Buddha.

Before entering the mosque for worship the Moslem still retains the old Mosaic practice of ceremonial ablution. The idea of the connection of the purification from physical and spiritual pollution is natural and universal. In the warmer and sub-tropical climates of Asia and Africa this connection is probably even closer than in more northern latitudes, and hence the universality of ablutions and washings in every systematised religion, whether ancient or modern. Symbolical purification was even among the chosen people far earlier in its origin than the Mosaic law. When Jacob returned from Padan-aram with the family he had acquired there, in bidding them put away

their strange gods he commanded them to be clean—*i.e.*, to wash or bathe, as it is explained in the Mishna, Aben Ezra interpreting it as baptism. So, before the delivery of the Ten Commandments, the people were to wash their clothes and sanctify themselves. Although every ceremonial defilement required by the law purification by the symbolical washing with water, in later times the rabbis still further amplified and extended the injunctions. This multiplication of ceremonial washings is not only frequently alluded to in the New Testament, but is continually mentioned in later Jewish writings.

The belief in the expiatory power of symbolic washing can be traced far further back than the Mosaic dispensation. The Egyptian priests, Herodotus tells us, bathed in cold water twice every day and twice every night before performing any sacred office. So, too, bathing was indispensable before sacrificing among both the Greeks and Romans, and even before the offering of any solemn prayer, as one of their poets says, "That thou mayest pray with holy hands, dip thy head twice and thrice in the flowing stream." The candidates for initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries were first purified by bathing in the sea. In all existing Oriental religions, symbolical lustration

has a prominent place. The bathing in sacred streams or holy fountains is of the very essence of Hinduism ; and we know the place that Gunga, the sacred Ganges, occupies in their system. The Buddhist temple, whether in China or Japan, has its sacred well, if not its holy stream, for the purification of the worshippers, who dip their fingers into the holy water as habitually as the peasant who enters a Romish church.

But it is among Mohammedans that the symbolical sprinkling is most universally practised. The compiler of the Koran seems to have incorporated into his system all the traditions of the Jewish rabbi ; for not only all religious rites and ceremonies are required to be prefaced by sprinkling with water, but also the repetition of the formal prayer at the different times of day, and many domestic usages demand the same. As illustrating the pure symbolism of the ceremony, we may mention that Mohammed allows the wandering Arab or the traveller in the desert to use sand instead of water when the latter is precious. The spiritual significance of all these washings is well grasped by the Psalmist when he says, "I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I compass Thine altar." So is their utter worthlessness as a mere form shown by the vain

washing of his hands by Pilate when he declared himself innocent of the blood of Jesus.

So incessant were the ablutions required by rabbinical teaching that it was necessary to have water-jars for the purpose in every house, generally placed in the courtyard hard by the door, like the six water-pots of stone mentioned in the account of the marriage at Cana. They were thus easily accessible to every one for use immediately before and after meals. These stone water-jars may still be seen in many of the villages of Palestine. At Kefr Kenna, near Nazareth, which claims to be the Cana of the Gospel history, there are many of them, certainly not of modern make; while, of course, in the house shown as the scene of the first miracle, there are six of them set up, and shown to travellers as the original water-pots of the history. Many others may be seen strewn about in the half-deserted villages of Galilee, and illustrate the accuracy of St. John's narrative; for stone jars are not now manufactured, earthenware having long since entirely superseded them. We may reasonably attribute them to the same age as the ruined synagogues in the same neighbourhood.

Among the many ceremonies connected with the symbolical use of water among the Jews there is one of peculiar interest alluded to by our Lord

when on the last, the great or eighth day of the feast, which was treated as a Sabbath, He cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

As with the Feast of the Dedication, many ceremonies had become established which are not to be found in the law of Moses. On each morning of the Feast of Tabernacles, a procession with trumpets, headed by a priest, went from the temple down the Kidron valley to the Pool of Siloam, where a golden pitcher was filled, and carried back to the Temple amidst the shouts of the people. While the water was being poured into one silver basin, and wine into another, the Hallel (*i.e.* Psalms cxiii.–cxviii.) was chanted by the whole assembly. They founded the custom on the words of Isaiah, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," and the Talmud explains it, "They draw there the Holy Spirit of Jehovah, for a Divine breathing is on the man through joy." We may picture our Saviour, as St. John evidently does in memory, standing over the brow of the steep ravine by the golden gate of the Temple as the grand procession passes, and loudly proclaiming the gift of the true spiritual water, the living water, that could satisfy the spiritual thirst, as those libations from Siloam never could. Men are

bid to drink of the water of the Rock, and "that Rock was Christ."

Our Lord's proclamation in the great day of the feast reminds us of the invitation, long before uttered by the prophet, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." This, too, was taken from a familiar Eastern scene. Who, that has ever sat under the ragged shelter of bamboo and matting that feebly attempts to afford a screen from the sun's rays in an Eastern bazaar, remembers not the sonorous and ceaseless cry of the water-bearer as he perambulates the narrow streets, "Ho, every one that is athirst, come! Come, drink water; come, drink sherbet! The price is nought; the water is good. Praised be Allah, the sherbet is good. In the name of the Prophet, come, buy and drink"? Thus, with Oriental dignity in his gait, the water-bearer steps along, a goat-skin bottle of water slung on his left shoulder, with the neck or mouth hanging down in front, and often a jar or keg of sherbet strapped on his right side, and a drinking vessel in his hand. For the smallest of Turkish coins—for a *para*—he pours forth his refreshing draught, which no good Moslem quaffs without giving praise to Allah! To such a purveyor the prophet compares himself. He stands in some conspicuous spot in the great

thoroughfare of life, and calls on the passers-by, wearied and worn with the heat of the way. He invites their attention to the refreshment they so much need, of which he assures them there is a goodly supply at hand, so that they may, if they will, "taste, be thankful, and pass on." But he bids them drink freely, unlike the sherbet seller, without money and without price. The wine and milk, in the days of Isaiah, would take the place of the sherbet, the sweet-flavoured and slightly acid, non-intoxicant drink of the modern Moslem.

In Eastern lands, untouched by Western fashions and travellers, there is nothing which at all corresponds to our idea of an inn or hostelry. The combination of sleeping quarters with provision for food and refreshment is absolutely unknown. On all frequented routes there is to be found, especially near any well or spring, the *café*, most frequently a rickety shed, whose only furniture is a broad settle running round the walls, where the travellers sit with their feet tucked up under them; and at the further end a small raised hearth, where the keeper boils his tiny pot of coffee with a pinch of charcoal, as from time to time a cup may be in request. But nothing else can be obtained here.

The khan, or caravanserai, is a very different thing. It is considered a meritorious work of piety

and mercy for a rich man to erect one at his own cost and dedicate it to the public. Even so far east as China the same custom prevails, and the builder of a travellers' resting-place is looked on as one of the greatest of public benefactors. The modern khan of Syria remains unchanged since Bible times. The word *mâlôn*, rendered "inn" in the Authorised Version, means literally "lodging-place," which the khans are and were, and nothing more. The first mention of an inn is in the account of Moses's journey from Midian to Egypt, a road at that time frequently travelled. Another word, with probably the same signification, is used (Jer. xli. 17) for "the resting-place" which Chimham, the son of Barzillai, built "by the side of" Bethlehem for the convenience of travellers from Palestine to Egypt. It was probably in this same caravanserai that Joseph and Mary sought shelter, and in an outbuilding of which the Saviour was born.

A khan consists of a spacious square enclosure with a gateway, by the side of which is the keeper's lodge. All that he is expected to provide is straw for sleeping on, and water. Everything else the traveller is supposed to bring with him. You pass through the gateway and enter the hollow square, on all sides of which are rows of chambers,

open in front for the animals, and some few with wooden fixed screens in front, or even walled in, so as to form chambers for the convenience of the women and the more fastidious guests. Most of the men prefer to sleep under the open arches by the side of their beasts and their merchandise. The camels kneel down in the open central space. For the accommodation a very small sum is expected by the keeper.

On one occasion, while travelling on the open plain of Mesopotamia, between Orfa and Diarbekir, I halted at nightfall at such a khan. The well was just within the gate. The keeper charged us a sum amounting to about threepence English per head for our night's lodging, and for each animal, including drawing water for them and supplying us with straw. Our store of food had fallen short, and we had to ask our host for supper. He willingly shared his own simple meal in his house with us, but for this act of hospitality he would make no charge, though, of course, ready to accept a backshêsh at parting. The Samaritan in our Lord's parable, before resuming his journey, gives two denarii to provide in anticipation for the wants of the wounded traveller. As a denarius was the ordinary wage for a day's labour, its practical power may be reckoned at over five shillings.

It was therefore by no means an insufficient recompense, especially as he was about to return, probably in a few days, when he had transacted his business at Jericho.

We may remark that the spot indicated by our Lord as the scene of the parable is unmistakable. About half-way down the descent from Jerusalem to Jericho, close to the deep gorge of the Wady Kelt, the sides of which are honeycombed by a labyrinth of caves, in olden times and to the present day the resort of freebooters and outlaws, is a heap of ruins, marking the site of an ancient khan. The Khan el Ahmar, as the ruin is called, possessed a deep well, with a scanty supply of water. Not another building or trace of human habitation is to be found on any part of the road, which descends three thousand feet from the neighbourhood of Bethany to the entrance into the plain of Jordan. All is desert—a barren, treeless wilderness. Irregular projecting masses of rock and frequent sharp turns of the road afford everywhere safe cover and retreat for robbers.

XI

EASTERN JURISPRUDENCE

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THE Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, abound with allusions to the administration of justice, to judges and legal tribunals. The oldest book in the Bible picturesquely describes the mode of administering justice in the earliest patriarchal times: "When I went forth to the gate unto the city, when I prepared my seat in the street" (*i.e.*, in the public place, the open space by the gate), ". . . when the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me: because I delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless also, that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy; . . . and the cause of him that I knew not I searched out" (Job xxix. 7–17). The natural chiefs of the place, the elders and nobles, or sheikhs, "sat in the gate," the open space always found just within the gateway of town

or village, the ordinary place of assembly. So in the first Psalm, the imagery of which is intensely Oriental and archaic, the first verse pictures to us society in its primeval simplicity, when men do not merely consort together for business, and then retire to spend their leisure within the seclusion of their private houses, but when, as still in an Eastern village or Arab camp, all the daylight is spent in public, where the elders gather and sit together till sunset at the entrance to the village, while the younger saunter in groups, taking note of their flocks and herds, or stand together listening to the gossip of some wayfarer, or telling stories too often the reverse of profitable. "Sitting in the seat of the scornful" suggests the contrast between the irreverent mockers who sit together to pour contempt on the good, and the law of the Lord, and those elders to whom there is a covert allusion in ver. 2. These also sit in the gate, but to expound and enforce that law which the good man loves.

We must bear in mind that the primitive tribunal for all causes and questions was not a formal court with official judges, but this assembly of the elders of the place, sitting in the market. Every traveller will recall the open space within the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem, where the country-folk gather for market, and the labourers wait to be hired. Here

were heard and tried all sorts of cases. There was no distinction between civil and criminal. Every man who had a grievance rushed to the gate, and in the loudest tones pleaded his own cause. I have often seen this tribunal in the remoter villages both of Africa and Syria. The elders sit silently and solemnly while the litigants declaim. Not so the bystanders, who invariably assume the functions of an amateur jury, as did the multitude when our Lord was before Pilate, and freely criticise the pleadings. But however vociferous the debate during the trial, all is hushed when the sheikh or council of elders have given their decision

In later times and in large centres of population this primitive tribunal gave place to the more organised courts held in the judgment-hall, or area of the citadel or palace. Still the mode of procedure was the same, and the judicial functions were not separated from the executive or military. Nor were they altogether so after the Roman conquests. Pilate was Procurator, *i.e.*, he governed absolutely under the Emperor, and had no Quæstor or judicial colleague ; while the senatorial provinces were governed by Proconsuls, but Quæstors presided in the law-courts. Pilate resided ordinarily at Cæsarea ; but for the great gathering at the Passover he came to Jerusalem to preserve

order; and at the time of our Lord's trial he was staying at his official residence in Herod's palace, in the castle of Antonia, which to this day is the palace and the judgment-hall of the Turkish pasha. We see that this, as well as every other act and word of Pilate, was in order to escape the responsibility of himself condemning One whom he knew to be innocent. The interrogations, the constant interruptions, the discussions with the accusers, the appeals to the crowd in the Prætorium, are all illustrated by the proceedings in Oriental judgment-halls to-day.

I once witnessed such a trial in a town in Armenia. A Circassian colony in the neighbourhood had an evil reputation as thieves and highwaymen. Some horses had been stolen. A Circassian had been caught shortly afterwards, and though his character was the only evidence of guilt, he was brought by the angry crowd before the *kadi* in the town-hall of the place. After some minutes of shouting and gesticulation, the judge, who sat at the further end of the hall on his carpet, with his scribe and some dignitaries round him, inquired the charge, which was very vague. He declined to condemn the man, on which the turbulent crowd began to use threats. Somewhat intimidated, the judge said he would speak to the accused in private. The man was led round, and

the judge and the defendant disappeared behind a curtain. My guide observed, as if it were a matter of course, that they had withdrawn to arrange a bribe. Soon they returned, and the mob began to cry out for vengeance. It was evident the prisoner had not been able to satisfy the demands of the judge; for the latter solemnly declared, not that the man was guilty, but that Circassians were thieves, and sentenced him to a hundred strokes of the bastinado at once, and to be kept in prison till the horses or their value should be restored. This is a trivial, commonplace instance, but enough to explain the many allusions in Scripture to unjust judges.

From the dawn of history the venality of judges and the miscarriage of justice has been one of the chief abominations which have called down the indignant remonstrances of prophets and holy men. The book of Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, prophetical writings, the Gospels themselves, are full of denunciation of unrighteous judges. Nor is the corruption less notorious throughout the whole Eastern world at the present day. A man who, like the foully murdered Midhat Pasha, sternly refuses bribes on the judgment-seat, is still looked upon with wonder and admiration. This character of a judge is indeed contrary to our impressions of that office, as

we see it in happier Western lands, where public opinion bears strongly on all functionaries, and Christianity has introduced a high standard of rectitude; but it is still to be seen in all its frightful corruption and malignity throughout the whole of Asia.

I well remember witnessing a scene which vividly re-enacted the parable of the unjust judge. It was in the ancient city of Nisibis, in Mesopotamia. Immediately on entering the gate of the city on one side stood the prison, with its barred windows, through which the prisoners thrust their arms and begged for alms. Opposite was a large open hall, the court of justice of the place. On a slightly raised daïs at the further end sat the *kadi*, or judge, half buried in cushions. Round him squatted various secretaries and other notables. The populace crowded into the rest of the hall, a dozen voices clamouring at once, each claiming that his cause should be the first heard. The more prudent litigants joined not in the fray, but held whispered communications with the secretaries, passing bribes, euphemistically called fees, into the hands of one or another. When the greed of the underlings was satisfied, one of them would whisper to the *kadi*, who would promptly call such and such a case. It seemed to be ordinarily taken for

granted that judgment would go for the litigant who had bribed highest. But meantime a poor woman on the skirts of the crowd perpetually interrupted the proceedings with loud cries for justice. She was sternly bidden to be silent, and reproachfully told that she came there every day. "And so I will," she cried out, "till the *kadi* hears me." At length, at the end of a suit, the judge impatiently demanded, "What does that woman want?" Her story was soon told. Her only son had been taken for a soldier, and she was left alone, and could not till her piece of ground; yet the tax-gatherer had forced her to pay the impost, from which as a lone widow she should be exempt. The judge asked a few questions, and said, "Let her be exempt." Thus her perseverance was rewarded. Had she had money to fee a clerk, she might have been excused long before.

We have some graphic pictures and illustrations of the primitive methods of administering justice and their abuses in the vivid description of Absalom's artifices and manœuvres before raising the standard of rebellion against his father (2 Sam. xv.). The wily plotter resorts to the place of judgment, "the way of the gate." Not but that the story of Absalom's tactics and devices is a picture of the scheming demagogue of every age and nation,

be he the Cleon of the republic of Athens, so pitilessly ridiculed by Aristophanes, the Jack Cade of mediæval English history as painted by Shakespeare, or the mob orator and Socialist leader of modern political warfare. There is the same artful flattery; the artful and sympathetic listening to the tale of wrong, or, it may be, of fancied grievance; the assurance that if only the speaker had but the power, all wrong should speedily be redressed; the condescending grasp of the hand and affectionate greeting; and withal the same outward show and ostentation so captivating to the vulgar mind: for Absalom had "chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him." It is in the little side-touches that the schemes of the traitorous son of David are so vividly illustrated. "Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate." The gates, closed at sunset for the protection of the city, are opened at daybreak, when the villagers, who have travelled during the cool of the night and then camped, with their beasts, on the open sward till dawn, hurry in; for very early habits are the rule in the East. Absalom was already there to meet them, with his eager offer of service, sympathetically inquiring of each comer in what way he could assist him. How we can picture the wily aristocrat playing

the democrat, prompt in his attendance at the opening of the gate, taking his seat on the *mastaba*, and, after hearing the claims, expressing in tones of deep sympathy his regret that the official judges had not yet arrived; but had he been only invested with judicial powers, which, unfortunately, he was not, justice would not have been so long delayed!

We may see the scene re-enacted now at the gates of Tibneh, or Tanjebeh, or any large out-of-the-way village. The officious courtier of the village sheikh eagerly accosts each litigant, and while listening to his tale, quietly handles the douceur passed to him without a word, in the confidence that it will secure his interest at the petty court. Soon the chief men gather on the accustomed seats, while each plaintiff loudly proclaims his grievance, frequently turning to the crowd to appeal to their sympathies. The problems to be decided by these primitive tribunals are generally neither very abstruse nor very complicated. The decision is by common-sense, or by rule of thumb, as we should say, but most frequently by the weight of the bribe surreptitiously passed to some counsellor of the court before the case begins. To us the habitual perversion of justice sounds strange, but not more strange than the idea of equal justice, without bribery or influence, does to an

Oriental. From the time of Job to that of Midhat Pasha yesterday the rulers who have been phenomenal for never perverting justice are handed down with saints and heroes in Asiatic history, as the illustrious names of their epoch.

The primitive tribunal of the elders in the gate could not continue as the relations of society became more complex ; and tribal authority became more and more subordinated to the organised central government of the State. Yet even in great monarchies the sovereign was expected personally to administer justice. The modern conception of a great sovereign is one who has sufficient knowledge of men and discernment of character to choose wise, trustworthy, and efficient servants of the State. No one would expect from the Queen of England or the Emperor of Germany that they should be versed in all the intricate problems of law, and be able to decide causes and questions between man and man. Such matters are reserved not for the highest rulers, but for supreme courts, or courts of Chancery. But the idea of an Oriental monarch is that he should be one who is ready at all times to hear the complaints of the humblest of his subjects, and himself to decide publicly all matters of right and equity. Solomon's one choice was that he might have

"an understanding heart to judge Thy people," that he might "discern between good and bad," thus putting the judicial function above all other royal requirements. Eastern jurisprudence is not burdened with the technicalities of the law-books of the West. Society is not so complex in its relations, and causes are decided by what we should call the rule of common-sense. It is then for common sense, for the power of discernment, that the young king prays. Even the successors of the khalifs, the Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia, receive the petitions of their subjects in person; and the latter at least hears litigants plead in the audience-chamber of his palace; while the expression the "Sublime Porte"—*i.e.*, "the lofty gate"—preserves the memory of the time when the Khalif sat in the gate himself to decide the disputes of his subjects. Herodotus tells that when the wild and lawless Medes decided to have a king who should combine the nation they did not look for a great soldier, but united their suffrages on one Deioces, who had become so famous for the wisdom and justice of his decisions that disputants came to him from all quarters; and thus the obscure village judge became the founder of the great Median dynasty and the ancestor on the female side of Cyrus the Great.

We may here note how the great step was taken which systematised the government and legislation of Israel, which unified their laws, and made out of a congeries of tribes a compact and law-governed people. Though Orientals have not that intense attachment to strict hereditary succession which marks some other races, yet all unite in recognising the voice of Divine Providence in the matter. "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice," is the firm faith of every Oriental, carried, in the case of many wicked rulers, even to the length of fatalism. "There is a divinity that doth hedge about a king," and this acceptance of a quasi-Divine right of such existing monarch is associated with a recognition that the king is directly chosen by God. Hence "The king can do no wrong" is more than a legal phrase with the tribes of the East. The Oriental demands a monarchy; but it may be elective or limited so long as he has a king. How easily his loyalty may be transferred from one to another, the repeated changes of the dynasties of Persia, of the khalifs, of India, may show. His highest idea of liberty is that of the sheikhs of the clans choosing a king as the nobles of Poland used to choose theirs: on the plain, sword in hand. But it does not follow that he must be absolute. Rather he

must be like the kings of Persia, unable to change the laws of the Medes and Persians. The stagnation of the Oriental races may be largely accounted for by this attachment to a personal government.

The reformation under Samuel was the first step in the consolidation of Israel. But he grew old and the scandal of his sons as corrupt judges recalled the dark memories of Eli's old age, and alarmed the leaders of the clans, who were beginning to feel themselves welded into a nation. Samuel's office was unlike any other dignity, ancient or modern, in the Eastern world. Recognised by all, he owed nothing to adventitious circumstances, either of birth, position, or consecration. He had never been ordained by man. His condition was purely personal, neither inherited nor transmitted to his posterity. In these respects he stands out in striking contrast to the general bent of Eastern ideas. In no other races in the world is there so strong a tendency to rigid formalism and to ceremonial exactness in religion as in Asia. But against this tendency the appearance of a prophet from time to time, a Samuel, Elijah, or John Baptist, is a countervailing, energy-giving power. The false religions which now brood over these lands maintain their influence in the

same way. It is not by its learned *Mollahs* and *Muftis* that Islam is kept alive. The flame of fanaticism is fanned by the appearance of dervishes or unordained prophets like the *Mahdi*, who claim direct communication with God. Unlike Samuel, most of them wield the sword as well as occupy the judgment-seat, and preach holy wars against all who are not of Islam. Some, no doubt, are men honestly stirred by a sense of the corruption around them, and mistaking enthusiasm for inspiration, believe themselves called of God to arouse a sleeping people.

But when the time came for the unification of Israel, not even Samuel's honoured voice could avail to alter the wish of the nation. He acquiesced without a murmur in what was practically his own deposition, but he took care to preserve the distinctness of religious from civil ordinances, and to maintain spiritual independence, so that no king could touch or change the law of Moses. He accepted the truth that—

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

So without bloodshed he guided the nation through the crisis which developed the tribal confederacy of Israel into a regularly constituted

monarchy. J. Stuart Mill has well summarised the result when writing, "The Jews had an absolute monarchy and a hierarchy. These did for them what was done for other Oriental nations by their institutions: subdued them to industry and order, and gave them a national life. But neither their kings nor their priests ever obtained, as in those other countries, the exclusive moulding of their character. Their religion gave existence to an inestimably precious institution: the order of prophets. Under the protection, generally, but not always, effectual, of their sacred character, the prophets were a power in the nation, often more than a match for kings and priests, and kept up in that little corner of the earth the antagonism of influence, which is the only real security for continued progress."

The distinction between the civil and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions first established by Samuel continued to affect the whole of the Jewish internal polity down to, and throughout the period of, the Roman rule. The usual system of the Romans, unrivalled in their power of organisation, was to rule the conquered through their own national leaders, taking good care meanwhile to keep a firm hold over the latter. Thus the Roman Procurator made and unmade the high-priest at

pleasure, but nominated him only from the priestly families. The relation of the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities in New Testament times to the supreme temporal power of the Roman empire may be illustrated by the present position of the Greek and Armenian hierarchy under the Turkish rule. Under whatever creed, ecclesiastical and civil functions have always been more or less combined in the East. However absolute or unscrupulous may have been the despotism, it has rarely failed to make use of the ecclesiastical leaders as its instruments. In our time the ratification of the Sultan is required for the validity of the election of either Greek or Armenian Patriarchs ; but this once obtained, their power, not only over their subordinates, but over all their co-religionists, is very great. Over clerics it is almost absolute ; and in the Asiatic provinces of Turkey the collecting and payment of the taxes and the apportionment of the share payable by each individual are referred to the bishop of each sect: the Government having first decided on the amount to be levied on each community. By this means much power, and often that of imprisonment, is in the hands of spiritual functionaries.

Similar to this, but more far-reaching, and more exactly defined, was the power of the high-priest

and the Sanhedrim of the Jews under the Romans. The Sanhedrim, which they found existing, with its prerogatives, from the time of the Maccabees, their conquerors maintained and recognised, and, as we see from the sacred narrative, they even allowed Annas, whom they had deposed from the high-priesthood, to retain a leading position in it. It was only very shortly before the time of our Lord's ministry that the power of life and death had been withdrawn from the Sanhedrim. But, short of this, they had uncontrolled authority over their own people in all matters; excepting where imperial politics, revenue, capital charges, or cases with foreigners were concerned. They could have beaten or imprisoned our Lord without any reference to the civil authority; but as they were bent on nothing short of His death, it was not enough to find Him guilty of a capital offence against the law of Moses, such as blasphemy. They must allege a charge such as that of treason or speaking against Cæsar, cognisable by Roman law, otherwise the prompt rejoinder might be, "If it be a matter of your own laws, see ye to it; I will be no judge in such matters." The limit of jurisdiction is very clearly defined, and therefore the charge before the Procurator is changed to making Himself a king and forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar.

Minute and exact as were the limitations and formalities laid down by the rabbinical authorities, especially in criminal cases, it is to be noted that in the case of our Lord these seem to have been all ignored, probably on the pretext that, as the charges were capital, and their power of carrying out capital punishment was abrogated, all that they did was informal. According to the Mishna, "cases of money are heard in the day-time, and may be determined in the night. Capital causes are tried in the day, and finished in the day. Judgment is passed the same day, if it be for acquitting; if for condemning, on the day after. Blessed is the judge who . . . delays his judgment, and lets it rest all night, that he may sift out the truth." In the case of Stephen, the Mosaic punishment of stoning was inflicted; but this was by an excited populace, without formal sentence. Josephus relates that Ananias the high-priest was deposed by Albinus, the successor of Festus, for having exceeded his powers in delivering James the Just and others to be stoned, and for assembling the Sanhedrim without his consent.

A fondness for civil litigation is one of the characteristics of all Orientals, and the division of inheritances raises as many disputes as in the days when our Lord was invited to act in such a

case. The tendency is facilitated by the fact that then, as now, in the East, there is comparatively little wealth in the easily convertible form of coin; that the investments so familiar among ourselves are absolutely unknown; but that a man's property is estimated very much as in the days of Abraham: by the number of his flocks and herds and the quantity of his household goods, as changes of raiment. A father may leave his property, *e.g.*, to be divided among his sons, giving the eldest son, as is the ordinary custom, a double portion. Hence arises the difficulty, How is the farm stock to be partitioned? For the settlement of such disputes the Jews had a special court: "the court of thou draw, I will draw." But the consent of both parties was required for this tribunal. The Talmud gives an instance: "A father had bequeathed to two sons a slave and a beast. Neither could be parted in two; and one brother said, 'Redeem thy share, or I will redeem mine.'" If the court decided in any case for a division, it referred the actual partition to officials called "dividers," who were responsible for the fairness of the division. The eldest son was always entitled to a double portion, which included the homestead. Such is still the rule; but the claims of younger sons cannot be ignored, whether

the mother was a wife or a slave. In this way Abraham gave portions to his children by Keturah. What is given to the younger children is generally personal property when there is such, as in the case of the parable of the Prodigal Son. The elder son would be entitled to two-thirds, comprising the estate. The younger had no right before his parent's death to claim his third, which his father gave him in the shape probably of precious stones and jewels, the commonest form to this day of investing wealth in the East.

XII

TRADE AND MONEY; TAXATION; DOCUMENTS; SEALS

XII

TRADE AND MONEY; TAXATION; DOCUMENTS; SEALS

THE Jews of the period antecedent to the Roman conquest cannot be said to have been a trading and commercial, still less a seafaring, race. After the dispersion of the Babylonish captivity, still more after the establishment of the Syrian kingdom of the Seleucidæ, the emigrants, scattered from India to Spain, developed that marvellous genius for commerce and financial enterprise in which the Jew has ever since been pre-eminent without a rival. But the Israelite at home in Palestine ever remained purely agricultural and pastoral. Yet there is a tenacity combined with pliability in the race, which has exhibited a power beyond that of any other people on earth, of adapting itself to circumstances and of thriving under every form of government, in every climate, and in the teeth of the bitterest, the most systematic, and the most

long-continued oppression and injustice to which any people in history has ever been exposed. The unique tenacity and genius of the Jew has doubtless been evolved through the very means employed by the Gentile, and especially the Christian, world to crush and impoverish him. For eighteen hundred years incapacitated by the laws of almost every country in Europe from holding land, excluded from every political office or distinction, his existence barely tolerated by law, and not always even that, hoarded and secreted wealth was the only earthly object within his grasp. Shall we wonder that he gained the reputation of being sordid, and that, defenceless by arms, he employed astuteness for his protection?

Before the dispersion, the national trade, if we except the golden epoch of Solomon, was small, and the commerce westward by sea was entirely in the hands of the Phœnicians; the inland traffic to the east was conducted by the caravans of the Arabians. The earliest commercial transaction known to history is the purchase of the cave and ground of Machpelah from the Hittites by Abraham. The cave, the field in which it was situated, and all the trees growing on it, were duly valued, and the whole formally made sure to Abraham by a covenant, for four hundred shekels of silver duly

and publicly weighed out, and handed over to Ephron. Here we have a very early sanction for the right of private property in land. And that plot yet remains to Abraham's family; there rest the bones of himself and his kinsfolk, undisturbed through all the vicissitudes of empires, held by trustees, the jealous and hostile Moslems, till Israel shall have her own again.

The money, whether in Abraham's transaction or in any other mentioned in the Old Testament, was not counted; it was weighed; in fact, it could not be counted, for at that period no coinage, in our sense of the word, was in use. The earliest mention of what was possibly a coin, as we understand it, is in Ezra ii. 69, when the word דַּרְכְּמֹנִים, rendered "dram" in A.V., but "daric" by the Revisers, signifies the gold coin current in the Persian kingdom. It does not appear to have been really coined in Persia before the reign of Darius Hystaspes (B.C. 521), who issued a new coinage, to which the name "daric" was given. The Persians derived the idea of coining from Lydia, and after the capture of Sardis (B.C. 564) the "staters," or gold pieces of Crœsus, probably circulated largely in the East, and would be the coins spoken of in Ezra ii. The earliest known coins are of electrum, the staters of Lydia, *circa*

B.C. 720. Crœsus on his accession (B.C. 568) abolished electrum, and coined gold and silver pieces, which are still extant. We have no traces of any Jewish coinage prior to the shekels of Simon Maccabæus (B.C. 139). The "darics" of Darius are only stamped on one side, having on the reverse the incuse, or mark of the anvil on which they were hammered, and which was notched in order to hold the piece firmly. On the other side, the obverse, they bear a figure of the king kneeling and bending a bow. Before the Lydians, the nearest approach to our ideas of coinage was the stamped weights used both in Babylonia and Egypt. These are found in the very earliest period of Egyptian and Chaldæan civilisation. Rings of gold or silver took the place of coinage. These were weighed, and are the money spoken of in Gen. xliii. 21 as "bundles of money," *i.e.*, strung together, just as the pierced coins of China and Japan are carried at the present day. Such were the earrings and bracelets given by Abraham's servant to Rebekah, the pieces of silver given by the Midianites for Joseph, or the earrings of gold given to Job by his friends. These pieces when collected were melted. Thus in 2 Kings xxii. 9 King Josiah is told, "Thy servants have gathered together" (Hebrew *melted*) "the money that was found in the house."

The shekel was originally not a coin, but a weight. Pieces of silver—it might be bars or ingots, as in China, or rings, as in Egypt of old and still in Africa—were weighed in the balance. The custom of weighing as well as counting the purchase money in any transaction in the East has come down to our own times. So varied and confused is the coinage, and so clipped and mutilated are even the best coins (for the filing off of a small portion of each piece is a habitual practice with dishonest traders), that it is impossible to ascertain the true value unless by weight. We find another mode of cheating alluded to by Amos (chap. viii. 5): "making the ephah small and the shekel great." The shekel was a fixed weight of two hundred and fifty-three or two hundred and sixty grains, a little over half an ounce. These fraudulent traders cheated in two ways: first by having the ephah, the measure which held the corn they sold, too small; and then by having the shekel, which weighed the silver they received in payment, too heavy.

In contrast to the making of the ephah small, our Lord speaks of "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." There is probably here a reference to the teaching we find embodied in the Talmud on measures, viz.,

that there are three kinds of good measures: the stricken-off, the heaped up, and the running over. The stricken-off measure was for ordinary trade. It might be struck off by a flat knife, or by a piece of wood run along the top of the measure; but the scrupulously honourable man would use a round ruler, which would both press down the corn, and could not, as a flat one might, catch any of the ears, and drag them away with it. But all measures for the service of the Temple were to be heaped up, excepting that for the high-priest's loaves, which was to be stricken off. A quaint reason is given for this: that, as the high-priest had to divide it into two tithes, if it were heaped, some of it might fall on the ground in the process. One rabbi says that a priest's hand should be filled neither with the measure stricken off nor heaped up, but with measures running over. Our Saviour promises even more: not only running over, but first pressed down.

In consequence of the scarcity of bullion and the limited extent of Hebrew commerce, wealth was more commonly accumulated in kind than, as we should term it, realized. The absence of commerce on a large scale almost necessitated this, though, as we learn from the parable of the talents, the fructification of money by lending it to bankers

was not unknown in our Lord's time, and had probably been introduced through intercourse with foreign nations after the return from Babylon. The four staples of agricultural wealth were corn, wool, oil, and wine ; and all these could be stored and kept for several years. Corn especially, preserved from damp in cemented cisterns or granaries, was and is very largely stored for future use by its possessors. The hoarding of wool explains the frequent allusions to the depredations of moths. Many Arab tribes at this day possess large hoards of wheat, which they conceal in various places in the desert, in what are called *silos*—underground pits, about eight feet deep, very carefully cemented, and bottle-shaped, with a narrow neck, just large enough to admit a man. These are plastered with cement, and the ground levelled, to prevent discovery ; and the secret is only known to two or three. It was to such stores as these that the ten men, who appealed to the traitor Gedaliah to spare their lives, referred when they said, " Slay us not ; for we have treasures in the field of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey " (Jer. xli. 8). These *silos* are frequently left unvisited for months.

On one occasion, on the plains of Moab, a tribe of Arabs, under whose escort I was travelling, came upon a village and camp which had recently been

deserted through war. At once our men began to sound the ground in all directions with the butt of their spears, knowing or believing there were *silos* near. They soon found one, and speedily opened it. It was full of indigo, there a valuable commodity, with which, in spite of my remonstrances, my guides speedily loaded all our animals, and passed on without the slightest compunction, congratulating themselves on their own cleverness. On my reproaching our sheikh for that he, being a pious Mussulman, should so rob his friends, he replied, "I take it because I am pious, and grateful to Allah for his gifts. Shall Allah spread a breakfast for me in the wilderness, and I be ungrateful enough not to partake of it?"

Not only produce, but the precious metals, are frequently hoarded in this fashion. The wrapping up of the pound in the napkin in the parable is an illustration of this habit, money and treasure being frequently concealed and buried in a country constantly disturbed by war, and with few banks or any other safe means of investment. To the present day the *fellahin* of Palestine commonly bury their trifling savings in the ground within their houses. The habit has come down from the remotest antiquity; and as very often, through death or other causes, the hoard is forgotten, the

practice of searching for hidden treasure, mentioned as early as the book of Job, is persistently carried on, especially about ancient ruins, and is not unfrequently rewarded by success.

But there are still now, as of old, capitalists who know how to make money fructify. Like the nobleman in the parable of the pounds, it is still the custom for grandees and officers of the Government to trade through their dependants, who are, as is expressed in the parable, their domestic slaves. A pound, if we take the word to signify the Attic *mina*, was a very small sum—not quite £4 sterling—but it was evidently given to each to test his ability and skill in trading. In those days, as in the East in our own days, there were few modes of investment, but there were, and are still, money-lenders or petty bankers who will receive money to lend it out on mortgage of the crops to the farmers and peasantry. But beyond this the art of banking has hardly gone. A great magnate considers it beneath his dignity to engage personally in money-lending. This he does through his subordinates, who are generally his slaves or freed men. Orientals are almost always in debt. Their ingenuity is exercised, not in keeping out of debt, but in scheming to avoid payment of their debts.

A pasha of Gaza twenty years ago amassed an

enormous fortune in a very short time by lending small sums to the cultivators of the land on the security of the coming crop. This he did, not personally, but through his household. The people, always eager to anticipate their gains, borrowed, till trifling sums, for which they were to pay 1 per cent. per month—*i.e.*, 12 per cent. per annum—on the security of the crop of olives, the staple of the district, had absorbed its estimated value for the year. The result was that at harvest-time the pasha found himself the owner of the whole crop of the district, and sold it to the hapless *fellahin*—for the olive is one of the principal food staples—at an exorbitant price. The same story might be told of nearly every village in Egypt prior to the British occupation.

Nor is the system by which the lawful revenue of the country was, and still is, raised under Eastern rulers much more equitable. The Romans, like the Turks, let out the collection of the taxes at each place to the highest bidder among the chief publicans. It is true that the amount payable on each article, as well as the impost on the land, was and is fixed by law; but the contractor has to pay his fixed sum, and to secure his own profit as best he can. This opens the door to every kind of surcharge and exaction; and if the oppressed

cultivator or merchant should appeal, the temptation to meet him by false testimony as to the value or quantity of his produce is to an Eastern official almost irresistible. It is to this evil custom that Zacchæus alludes when he speaks of false accusation.

Nor is this the worst feature in the Oriental fiscal arrangements. The "grievous service" under which the subjects of the magnificent Solomon groaned was not peculiar to his reign or epoch. This system of *corvée*, or forced labour, has been at the root of the misery of Oriental nations, and of many others also. It led to the downfall of the Tarquins at Rome; it existed in France to the epoch of the Revolution, of which it was one of the principal causes, for naturally its weight fell most heavily on the poor; it was enforced in the militarily governed parts of Algeria till the fall of the second empire; it ground the unhappy *fellahin* of Egypt to the lowest state of degradation, compelled by the *kurbash*, a weapon worse than the whips of Solomon, until recently abolished by the English occupation; it still flourishes in Persia, and in a modified form throughout the Turkish empire, where, however, it is only enforced for works of public and local utility; it was recklessly and brutally used by the French contractors for the

construction of the Suez Canal, under warrant from the then Khedive; it was practised in all the native states of India till the British *raj* interposed; it was the principal grievance of the Russian serfs until abolished by the Emperor Nicholas.

Very different was the mode in which the Temple was restored by Jehoiada under Joash, or rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra, and afterwards maintained. It was not raised by royal edict imposing a subsidy, or by workmen impressed for service for so many months in the year, but by freewill offerings, as when the people in the wilderness offered willingly unto the Lord. There were three classes of offerings by which the services of the temple were maintained after the return from Babylon: (1) the gifts in performance of vows made for answers to prayer, or such vows as the Nazarite's; (2) absolutely freewill gifts; and (3) the regulation half-shekel of the sanctuary, paid by every Jew, but which could not be enforced by law, as we are reminded by the inquiry to Peter, "Doth your master pay tribute?" showing that it was voluntary. The shekels of the sanctuary were each worth twenty gerahs, not quite three shillings of our money. They were originally not currency or coins, but pieces of silver, perhaps stamped, but of no legal authority. These, we read, were in

every transaction weighed, the word "shekel" signifying "weight," not a coin. The same method is still in use in Africa. The writer has in his possession numerous shapeless pieces of silver, which he received as money among the Touareg in the Sahara, all stamped with various devices, but always weighed in any business transaction, and each weighing exactly a Spanish dollar. Standard weights appear to have been kept in the Temple.

It is in connection with matters of royal finance that we first meet with the mention of scribes (*sepher*) in the Old Testament, state officials, secretaries of state, who must not be confounded with the ecclesiastical scribes subsequent to the return from Babylon, and who frequently are distinguished as "the king's scribes." This was an important office of state in all Oriental monarchies. It was their duty to keep an account of all tribute received, and of the spoil of captured cities. In the Assyrian sculptures the king's scribes are frequently represented with a long scroll of parchment in their left hand, and a pen in their right, making an inventory of the booty brought in by the soldiers. All the spoil was first brought by the captors to one place, where it is represented as being carefully sorted and counted in the presence of the royal scribes, who take an exact inventory of the

whole before it is carried away. Scales are being used to weigh the bullion and articles made of the precious metals, lest they should be clipped afterwards. A certain proportion of the gold and silver, in whatever form it might be, was due to the temples of the national deity, and another portion was set apart for the king's private treasury, while a smaller share was enjoyed by the captors.

Scribes or professional writers existed from the dawn of civilisation. The earliest trace in Biblical history is the name Kirjath-sepher, *i.e.* "Book-town," the most ancient name of Debir, a city a little to the south of Hebron, while in the possession of the Hittites (a literary and civilised people) in the time of Abraham. All the books written by the scribes, both from the etymology of the word rendered "roll"—*megillah*—and from the representations both in the sculptures of Assyria and the paintings of Egypt, seem to have been strictly what we mean by "roll," and not arranged in leaves, as our books. In Jeremiah (chap. xxxvi. 23) we read of the leaves of the roll which Jehoiakim destroyed; but the word rendered "leaves" is literally "folding-doors," and is here applied to the "columns" in which the writing on the roll is arranged. The book is a long strip of parchment, or of many sheets of

parchment sewn together, varying from six inches to two and a half feet in width. Across this long roll the writing is arranged in columns (the "leaves" of our version), so that the reader, beginning at the right-hand column, unrolls as he proceeds, rolling up with the right hand the column he has already read. The roll being of parchment, the king could not tear it, but takes a "penknife," literally the "scribe's knife," the long narrow blade, used for sharpening the reed pen and for making erasures, which every secretary, like Elishama, carries in his girdle to this day, and cutting the parallel columns one after another from the roll, casts them into the fire.

In all transactions in the East, both in ancient and modern times, whether political or financial, the essential, crucial part is not so much the work of the scribe—*i.e.*, the writing or the signature—as the seal. The use of seals or signet rings goes back to the furthest antiquity. The seal, not the signature, is the evidence of consent. We know the cartouches or signets of the earliest kings of Egypt of whom we have any historical record, beyond B.C. 3000. The Babylonian seals can be traced back a thousand years earlier. They were cut in precious stones or formed of pottery. The seal was often hung on a string round the neck under

the clothing, as it is frequently at the present day by the Arabs, and as Judah seems to have carried his signet (Gen. xxxviii. 18). The seals were also worn in rings on the finger, and in later times almost universally so.

Impressions of the seals of most of the Assyrian monarchs may be seen in the British Museum; as these were impressed on clay, which was then burnt and affixed to the document: and without a seal none were valid. Often the document has perished, but the seal remains, perforated for the thongs which attached it, and of which the ashes can be detected. On one of these pieces of clay are the seals of the king of Assyria and of Sabaco, king of Egypt, the "So," of the book of Kings, side by side. Now we are told (2 Kings xvii. 4) that the siege of Samaria, begun by Shalmaneser and continued by Sargon, arose from Hoshea's having been engaged in intrigues with So, king of Egypt, of whose history we have from the monuments full details. This intrigue afterwards brought on a war between Sargon and So, or Sabaco, in which at length the Assyrians were victorious. The lump of clay referred to above was found at Nimroud, and the holes through which passed the parchment thong that attached it can be seen. On it are the distinctly legible

impressions of two seals side by side, with the marks on the clay of the finger and thumb which impressed it. One of the seals is an Assyrian royal signet, representing a priest ministering before the king; the other is the cartouche of Sabaco, or So, the Second, the Ethiopian, of the identity of which there can be no doubt, as it is well known to Egyptian scholars. Tirhakah, the king defeated by the Assyrians near Lachish, was his immediate successor. A peace having been concluded between the two monarchs, the royal signets, thus found together, were attached to the treaty which was laid up in the royal archives. While the document has perished by time, this singular proof of the alliance, and probably actual meeting, of the two monarchs is still preserved, forming one of the most remarkable instances on record of the illustration of Scripture history.

Not only great men, but even the humblest freeman, still has his seal; and I possess the written contracts made with my muleteers and servants from time to time, not one of whom could write or read, but have signed with their signet rings in the presence of an attesting witness. The custom of affixing a seal is still retained in England for the transfer of stocks, though the seal is simply a patch of red paper

gummed on, while the signature is the all-important part of the document. In old times it was the reverse. Thus the Dean and Chapter of Durham possess a scrap of parchment, not larger than a man's hand, granting to the cathedral a farm which they still hold, with a large wax seal attached of King William Rufus (A.D. 1087), and in the corner of the document a cross with "the king his mark" in Norman-French.

When our Lord declares, "Him hath God the Father sealed," He is probably referring to the rabbinical saying, "The seal of God is truth." "One day," says the Talmud, "the great synagogue were weeping, praying, and fasting, when a little scroll fell from the firmament upon them. They opened it, and on it was only one word: אמת, *ameth* (truth). 'That,' said a rabbi, 'is the seal of God. It consists of three letters; א is the first, מ is the middle, and ת is the last of the alphabet. And it means, "I the Lord am the first; I received nothing of any one, and beside Me there is no God. There is not any that intermingles with Me, and I am the last."'"

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